LIFE

IN

WESTERN INDIA.

BY

MRS. GUTHRIE

AUTHOR OF 'THROUGH RUSSIA,' 'MY YEAR IN AN INDIAN FORT,' ETC.

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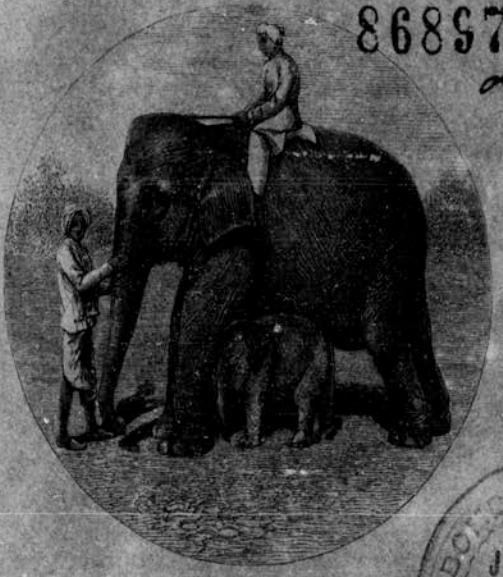

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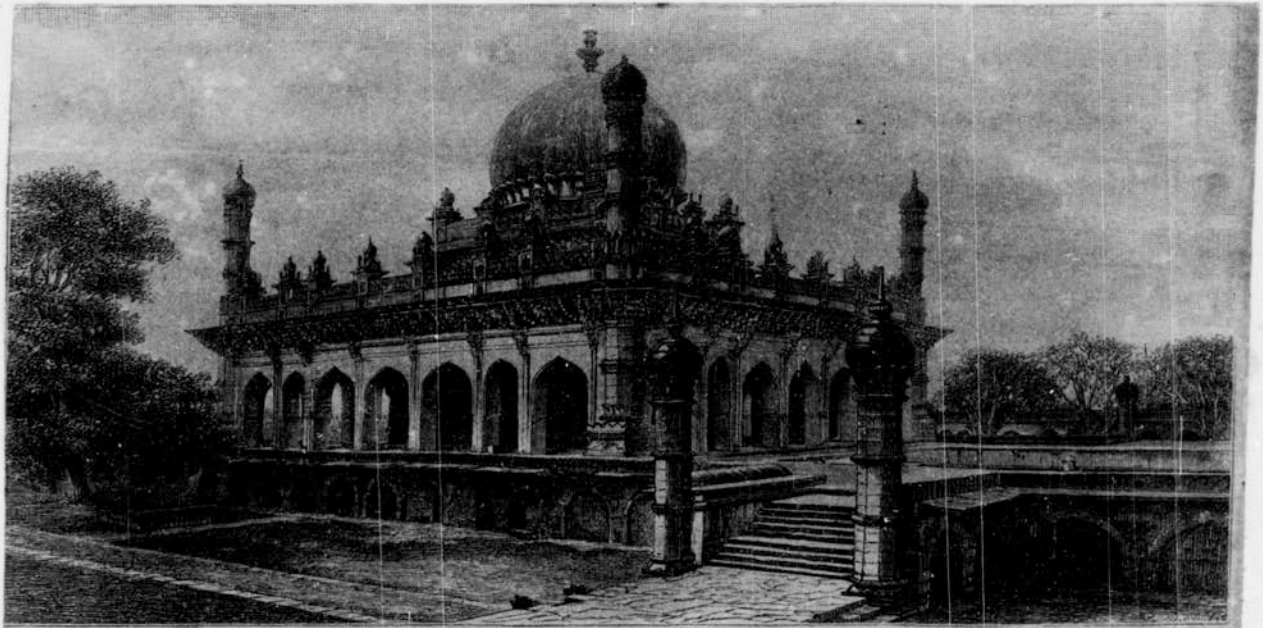

THE MOSQUE OF IBRAHIM ROZAH, BEEJAPUR.

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CHAPTER I.

Journey to Máhableshwur—Preparations for Departure—Pleasures of Posting in India—Drive through Kólhapur—Discovery of Relics—Aspect of the Country—The Seven-starred Fort—A Hindoo Deformity—A Sad Blunder—Acacia Arabica—Fort of Pandugurh—Teeming Population—Tame Fish—The River Krishna—Remarkable Temples.

THE eternal mildness of Southern India is delightful, but enervating, and renders occasional change of air desirable. The rains being over, it was determined that we should seek for a time the bracing air of Máhableshwur. November found us very busy. A stranger to the country would have been struck with astonishment at the numbers of people required,

and the quantities of baggage to be moved on such an occasion. A long line of bullock-carts filed into the compound. It was a sight to see them start, laden with innumerable miscellaneous articles. Two of them were reserved for the families of the servants—one of the nuisances of the country being that along with a domestic you take his wife and children, even his grandmother, if he chance to have one. On an occasion such as this it is like moving a small village. Then there were the horses, the buffaloes, the oxen that drew the carriages, the dogs, the poultry, and though last, not least, Miss Jennie, the monkey. Such a barking and cackling and jabbering there was when the kit started (in India *kit* is a word even more liberal in its application than the Italian *roba*). On the journey the train camped during the day, and divided the hundred and seventy miles it had to traverse into nine or ten night marches. I was to make the journey in company with a lady friend.

It was lovely moonlight when we stepped into the comfortable carriage that was to con-

vey us to our destination. One of the pleasures of posting in India is the complete independence of the traveller. Occasionally we halted, either to renew our acquaintance with some object of interest, or to visit a spot that had on former occasions escaped our notice.

It was a pleasure renewed to drive through the picturesque town of Kólhapur. The many-storied houses are so close together that they leave but one narrow ribbon of blue sky overhead. All around is colour, and carving, and life, for the population of this city is very large. The country in which it is situated is bare, but there is a place about two miles off that is charmingly pretty and highly interesting. Long ago it was a great centre of Buddhism, till their religious successors, the Jains, settled on the spot; but they also have vanished in the course of time, and the Brahmins have taken possession of their temples. They stand upon the brow of a cliff that overhangs the river Punch-Gunga. The buildings, which are enclosed by high walls, consist of low halls, with aisles of pillars. In the distance twinkles the

light that is suspended in the cell of the idol. Many queer excrescences built of brick—the dwelling of the priests—were stuck on to the holy fanes. In the courtyard were numbers of tombs gaudily painted, on which the five-headed Nága flourished conspicuously. The glory of the place were nine fine monoliths of stone that stood before the temples; these, being bracketed for the purpose of bearing lamps, go by the name of Deepdans. The pillar is as true to the Indian temple as was the obelisk to the Pyramid of Egypt.

Quitting the holy precincts, we sat down to rest under a group of fine trees. The spot commanded a view of the sparkling river, which here sweeps round in a graceful curve. Numbers of tombs and little shrines, which in flood-time must have been partly submerged, were scattered on its brink. The broad ghâts were thronged with people busy with their morning's occupations, whose coloured dresses suited with the brightness of nature. It was a scene of peaceful gaiety. A few weeks previously some curious relics of the long past were

found near the spot where we were sitting. The first consisted of a round pot, which was found to contain a mass of lead and copper coins, rusted and stuck together. The second was discovered by some men, who, while digging in a garden in the same vicinity, came upon what was doubtless the crumbling remains of a Buddhist Tope. In this was found a stone box, or trough, about sixteen inches square, which had a lid with bevelled edges. On its under-side were inscribed some words in ancient Nagari characters, and in the Prakrit language, which, according to the opinion of the learned, fixed the inscription to belong to the Asoka period (King Asoka reigned from B.C. 272 to 236). The inscription translated stands thus: "Gift of Bamah, caused to be made by Dhamaguta." The trough had contained a small crystal box, but unfortunately this was broken by the labourers. The casket is supposed to have contained some personal relic of Buddha. The crystal of the box was

und and well-turned as any piece of cut ware of the present day. Crystal is not

found in the ccan, and it is thought probable that the pie n question may have come from the Himala In very ancient days pieces of this charmi nineral are known to have been handed do as precious heirlooms. One of the vessels so contained a number of little terra-cotta jects, such as are found in the tombs and neral urns of many countries, in which the em to have been hidden for the express pu se of puzzling antiquaries. Those in questio ere miniature models of the pots to be foun the present day in every Indian bazaar.

It was gested by some one that in this instance had been introduced in a sportive mood the artisan, who turned upon the wheel th ot containing them, and closed the mouth w clay.

I was tunate enough to obtain possession of a co of these coins, which bore inscriptions th proved them to have been struck about t hundred and fifty years before the Christia a. There have been many op respecti the objects represented upon

but all are agreed that one of them is the famous Swastica.*

Mr. Furgusson believes this to be an emblem of the Nága race. "It is found," he remarks, "wherever we have been able to find traces of serpent-worship in the western world."† In India it is the sign of one of the Buddhas. The Hindoos mark it upon their houses on occasions of festivals, and it is the usual female signature. Mr. Wallace, in a paper entitled "Archæological Notes," notices its frequent appearance as a mason's mark—the ubiquitous Swastica. "In Iceland it was called Thor's hammer, and is found on Runic monuments, ancient Roman altars, and Danish medals. It exists upon the stones of Lincoln Cathedral, and on those of Haddon Hall; in Spanish cathedrals, in that of Basle, in the church at Oschatdz, and may be seen in high relief upon a brass amulet now in the South Kensington Museum."

* "Snake and Serpent Worship," by the author,

† See "Indian Antiquary," vol. i.

Dr. Schliemann finds it in Ilium, and believed it to be the symbol of the holy fire. Some antiquarians conceive it to be of Chinese origin, and it is found on Japanese coffins. The figure, sown broadcast over great part of the inhabited world, must embody some widely-spread meaning, and the opinion lately arrived at seems to be that, like the whorls found on the site of Troy, the Swastica was a conventional way of representing the sun and its motions.

Another morning dawned, and found us nearing Sattara, with its swelling wolds and bare hills; but there were no more far-stretching mango topes, no more luxuriant clumps of trembling bamboo. The chaplain there had made arrangements to enable us to visit the "seven-starred fort," but the plan could not be carried out. Those that choose to climb the steep ascent are rewarded by obtaining a magnificent prospect over mountain and plain, as well as a bird's-eye view of five notable villages, respectively the birthplaces of Sivajee, the Peishwa, Holkar, Scindía, and the Guikwar.

The air was chill when we re-commen

journey. To the west we had the shadowy ghâts, which the impetuous Koina cleaves asunder; to the east there ran a most remarkable chain of apparently isolated hills, every one of them a natural fortress. The squares of black basalt that crowned them were so symmetrical that it was difficult to credit nature with the work. Great herds of buffaloes were wending their way to distant pastures—bulky creatures, with translucent eyes and monstrous horns. It was curious to see the fearless independence of the naked little urchins that drove them, whose only covering was a vine-leaf of silver. A boy of five or six years, who, like his little comrades, appears to have no sense of fear, will take his cattle to some far-away place, pass the long day in solitude, and drive them home in the gathering dusk. It is quite the contrary with the adult peasant. Like all Easterns, he dreads the profound silence of the midday hour. He shuns "the haunted pipal's quivering shade," expecting to see there strange shapes; but at night he fears the wandering flames that flit about in the damp hollows when the rains are

subsiding. The *ignis-fatuus*, he declares, "is *born* a ghost."

The aspect of the country improved as we advanced. Thickets of trees were dotted about, and the spire raised over the cell of many an idol glimmered through the foliage. One temple presented so important an appearance that we determined to walk to it, taking with us Luximon,* our English-speaking Hindoo servant. Passing through a little town, we induced a tall man in a large green turban to guide us through its lanes. He conducted us to a steep brow overhanging the rocky bed of the impetuous Krishna, upon the strand of which stood many an ancient tomb and shrine. A steep flight of steps, formed of splinters of rock, led up to the temple, which was enclosed by high walls. Passing under a lofty doorway, we felt well rewarded for our pains. The building was raised up on a high platform,

* The name given to a Hindoo boy is that of the god worshipped at the temple familiar to his family on the day of his birth, just as the name of the saint's-day is given to Roman Catholics of the poorer classes.

mounting which, we looked into a great, dim hall; but our dazzled eyes could scarcely distinguish the objects in it. Sculptured on each side of the doorway, in high relief, was the Hansa, or Sacred Goose, represented in the act of flying.*

The fine, extinguisher-shaped tower was curious, and evidently of ancient construction. Tier upon tier of niches rose to its summit, set with figures in terra-cotta, coloured, and nearly life-size. Besides the goddess, to whom the shrine was dedicated, there was a crowd of other divinities, and mythological animals. In one niche stood a particularly interesting figure, that of a Máhratta warrior, equipped for battle. The good right hand clutched a short sword. The left held a shield,

* The Hansa, so greatly venerated, was the wild goose, and it is surmised that the bird came to be thus esteemed on account of its migratory habits, which the imaginative priests likened to their own periods of withdrawal from the world, for the purpose of meditation. It is, however, probable that some deeper meaning underlies the idea; for the old writers have it that the soul dwells in heaven as Hansa, a name for the sun.

ornamented with bosses. The figure probably represented the founder of the edifice, and a fierce-looking fellow he was. High up on the tower huge beasts apparently sustained their position by their human hands and arms. We were presently joined by a Brahmin, a man of repulsive appearance. Save for the one long tuft of hair behind, his head was as bare and almost as polished as a billiard-ball. A dirty cord, the sacred string, was drawn in a slanting direction across his chest. He was naked to the waist, and he had what our Trans-Atlantic neighbours call, "a crowded mouth."* Retracing our steps by the back of the town, we came upon a lofty façade of red brick, inside of which was the palace of the chief to whom the place belonged. We were invited to cross the

* This deformity is common among the Hindoos. The great Buddha himself is said to have had a superfluity of teeth, but that was convenient, as he had so many topes to supply. I have not noticed this among the Parsees, but they must suffer, or have suffered, from the defect, as their religious books maintain "that, in the paradise of their golden age, they were not troubled by a superfluity of teeth."

large courtyard, and to enter a handsome colonnade attached to the palace. The wall was covered with paintings, representing mythological subjects. But the special object we had been brought to see was the family shrine, which stood in a dark chamber, and was made of pure white marble, beautifully sculptured with arabesques. Two ancient women, with streaming white hair, holding fans of peacocks' feathers, stood one on each side of this Holy of Holies. When they saw us, they proceeded to light up two lamps, of many wicks, that stood before the shrine between them. On the floor was a handsomely-embossed tray, on which were scattered the metal vessels used in the sanctuary. The lights disclosed the prettiest of little puppet shows, consisting of three figures of about a foot high, dressed out in crimson and gold. They were powdered all over with some minute substance that glittered brilliantly, probably diamond dust. The middle figure represented Ráma, and the two ladies his wives. One of them must have been the far-famed Sîta, who proved her purity by the

ordeal of fire. Thanking the priestesses, in whose willing hands we left some small silver pieces, we set forth on a further tour of inspection. There was in the town a very fine cenotaph, erected to the memory of some former chief of Boynje, for such was the name of the place.

Continuing our journey, we travelled on an embankment, sheltered on each side by the milk bush, a kind of euphorbia, the milk-sap of which, when evaporated, yields gutta-percha. Behind it rose a fine avenue of bâbool (*acacia arabica*), one of the most valuable of Indian trees, the mimosa-like foliage of which delights the eye. It attains a very large size, especially in the north of India, and the timber is hard and fine-grained. It is the much-prized shittam wood of the Bible. The gum, which fetches so high a price, runs down the bole, and coagulates into great, clear lumps. The bark yields a very useful brown dye; the flower is sold to the perfumers, and the pod is greedily devoured by camels and other animals.

The damp fields bore luxuriant crops of millet

and sugar-cane. The latter grew in patches hedged in by the palma Christi, or castor-oil plant. This, according to Birdwood, is also mentioned in Scripture under the name of kikayon, but he adds, "So disputed has this reference been that St. Jerome and St. Augustine, passing from the force of argument to the argument of force, actually exchanged blows on the subject." *

Tobacco was another and a pretty crop. Its lance-shaped leaf, however, is not often seen under cultivation in this part of the country, for fermentation sets in so rapidly that it is difficult to cure. There were numbers of birds in this region; doves cooed in the bushes and hovered about, evidently liking our society, and the rosy-ringed parroquets darted from tree to tree. Our avenue was as straight as a Roman road, and our destination was in view miles before we reached it. Wai is the Lambeth of this part of India, being the residence of a princely priest, the head of the Brahmani

* See Birdwood's "Vegetable Products of the Bombay Presidency," p. 78.

Cultus in the western Deccan. The ancient town has suffered from many vicissitudes. Situated just at the foot of the Syhadrees, it commands the keys of the defiles that open out the Konkan. In the year 1347, its adjacent fort was occupied by the Sultan Allah-ul-deen. For centuries its possession was disputed by Mohammedan or Hindoo, and there were intervals, occasioned by war or famine, when it shared the fate of the neighbouring hill-forts, and fell into the hands of Polygars and robbers.

We went at a foot's pace through the town, stopping occasionally. There were very large houses with courtyards, and some of them appeared to have been partially fortified, having towers at the angles. Their massive doors were of teak wood, clamped with iron. The little wicket, ornamented with finer work, was generally open, and afforded a glimpse into an interior which had seen better days. Buffaloes and oxen were stalled in the shady verandahs that well-armed warriors had often trod. Some of the old carved beams sloped in an ominous fashion.

Leaving these relics of a past age, we emerged upon a lofty viaduct of many arches that spans the Holy Krishna, the sacred river so dear to the Hindoo. From the height we looked down upon black rocks, chafing water, and clustered temples, and then we lost sight of them, and were set down at the traveller's bungalow, charmingly situated upon ground, prettily wooded, that sloped down to the river. I was all impatience to be out of doors, but the coffee was hot, and dinner had to be ordered. I carefully avoided the mention of beef, but, alas! I made a sad blunder; I proposed—fish. The stately Hindoo drew himself up in shocked amazement. "Fish!—the fish of the sacred river, kept for the service of the temples!" Much abashed, I begged that we might have what was most convenient, and, seizing my hat, escaped.

The fish that I had proposed to eat, called murral, are one of the sights of the place. They are kept in a lake-like pool at some distance from the town. They are very tame, and, when summoned by a peculiar call, they rise to

the surface of the water and struggle for the food thrown to them. It was still cool when I sat down by the side of the Krishna. The most prominent object before me was Pandugurh, the grim fort that stands sentinel over the town—a lofty, conical hill, with a flat top, which both nature and art have united in forming into an almost impregnable fort.*

Pandugurh has looked down upon strange and stirring scenes, and innumerable are the legends, mythical and historical, which cling around it. Thither wandered the Pandavas with their wife, Draupadi, and their priest, Dhaumya, followed by their faithful dog Zama, in disguise, and there they spent eleven years of their exile. The most jagged rocks in the river's bed were hurled there in spiteful play by the wicked Bhima (the terrible), and, when they recommenced their painful journeying, they left their name as a legacy to the rock that had sheltered them. A grain of truth,

* The sites of such forts, however, could not have been made available had it not been found that plentiful streams of water welled from their lofty tops.

possibly the arrival of some ancient settlers, none too amiable, may be embodied in this myth, but Pandugurh knows all about it.

On the opposite side of the river, raised on platforms from whence steps descended to the water, the temples were grouped. The scene presented was strikingly beautiful. Up and down the stream reflected the tapering towers that rose above the cells of the idols. Many of these towers were crowned with the conventional ornament known as the alamaka.* The temples are, with one exception, tolerably modern, but the one that is of an earlier period is believed to be very old. The roof is made of slabs of stone curiously locked together. It is said to have been erected upon a mound of earth, which was removed when the stones were judged to fit into one another securely. The ruined walls of the town, barnacled over with dwellings of wood and brick, formed a pictur-

* Some people are of opinion that the alamaka is copied from the berry of the phyllanthus-emblica, but others believe, and with more probability, that the design has been copied from some straight wooden original.

esque background to these buildings. Here was a loop-hole, there a turret, or a carved verandah, painted red. One stout bastion looked as if it could do its duty still. The wild fig-tree had caused many a breach in the old wall, which the long green leaves of the waving plantain partially concealed.

One of the charms of the place was its teeming population. I had a chair brought down to the side of the water, and there, chased by the sun from one little oasis of shade to another, I passed the live-long day, watching the people on the opposite bank. The clear stream reflected many a red and yellow śari. The women of Wai have a reputation for beauty, and they set off their pale skins by wearing bright colours. They were very busy scrubbing their pots and pans, until they glittered in the sunshine. Some of them were washing their clothes, or bathing. Their plan was to walk into the water clad, carrying a change of garment upon their heads. After ducking many times, they slipped on the dry clothes with the utmost propriety, and those which they had

discarded were well rinsed and laid out to dry. Amid these homely scenes, the cow of an irritable old woman, or a stray buffalo, would occasionally make its way along the steps where it had no business, and then the women would clutch up their children, and separate in order to let the animal pass, but no one thought of treating the creature harshly.

A little up the river the water creamed over one of the bunds which are the means of forming such beautiful cascades; below it was shallow, and could be forded. Some petty chief, with gay trappings on his white horse, as he passed this part of the river, would stop to let the creature drink, and, as it shook its head with evident enjoyment, the glittering drops would fall from its mouth. Great cream-coloured bullocks, with deep hanging dew-laps and brass collars, and perhaps a wreath of marigolds, were standing knee-deep in the stream, and swishing the flies away with sweeping strokes of their tails. Girls might be seen balancing bundles of grass on their heads, and, raising their saris higher than usual, would

bare their shapely nut-brown limbs, and step daintily into the water. Even the miserable bazaar ponies would find their way to the strand, and have their share of the pleasure in the river.

When the sun gets hot people seek their shady dwellings, and then it is the turn of such poor creatures as are homeless to lave their limbs and wash their tattered clothes. It was an interesting and curious scene, but, as I looked upon the scattered temples, I could not but think that they were typical of the selfishness that caste, intended as a bond of union, has nurtured. Among the Hindoos there is now none of that unity that brings with it brotherly love. Building a temple, however, must have been a delightful way, to the egotist, of ensuring eternal felicity. I could imagine how the proud Brahmin would have the ground prepared by stately ceremonies, with what pride he would place the first stone, and when the temple was finished, and the idol to whom the fabric was dedicated was placed in its cell, with what lights, and flowers, and feasting the ceremony

would be performed, the Brahmin doubtless sharing the honours of the day with the stony-hearted god. It would rejoice many a man to have as silent a colleague.

As the day declined my friend came out, and we strolled towards a temple that was erected on a high rock, overhanging the Krishna. It was very old, and the steps, of hard black stone, that led up to it were worn into hollows by the naked feet of many a generation of men. The edifice, which had a fine spire, was enclosed within high walls. Joined on to it was a brick-house of some size, probably a math (half school, half monastery). Some youths were sitting on the tombs, shaded by the pipal-trees. They exhibited a great desire, which we gratified, to examine the book which my companion carried. What they thought of the highly-sensational picture it bore on its yellow cover, I know not. On descending, we took our way over broken ground, shaded by large trees, the shadows of which were already sloping towards the east. Tombs and circles of rudely-worked stone cropped out of the grass. One tall, partially-shaped

splinter had a Nága carved upon it in high relief. Snake-stones in situ are thought to have been placed where living snakes were once nurtured. Another great bit of rock stood sentinel before it. On the bank of the river rose a square erection, that must often have been submerged. The outlines of feet were traced upon it, for the impression of which the Vishnavas have a peculiar reverence. This is sometimes an indication that suttee has taken place upon the spot, but it may also mean that a holy person has rested there. To swear "by the feet" is common to all Hindoos; and a similar veneration for footsteps obtains among Mohammedans.*

* The Turks are thorough believers in the efficacy of the imposition of feet as a cure in cases of sickness. I was witness to a ceremony of this sort in Constantinople. A man, suffering from fever, was extended upon the floor of a mosque, and a dervish, a tall, heavy man, walked upon his body, stepping from the feet to the head. It was asserted that from that time the invalid would begin to recover. A somewhat similar case occurred in the establishment of a friend of mine in Poona. One of her Hindoo servants, believing that he was very ill, refusing other remedies, sent for a young boy to walk up and down him.

In the soft twilight we picked our way over the rocks by the water, and when the moon shone out we crossed a stretch of ground where innumerable specks of crystal shone like diamond dust. On the viaduct we paused, and looked down upon the temples grouped up and down the river. The broad, deserted ghâts were silent now. The sacred Krishna, bound on her long career, flowed by them a stream of silver. So lovely, so tranquil was the scene that it seemed all unreal—a vision in a dream. We moved away at last, and, bending our steps towards the distant lights, we found ourselves in the central square of the town. Alone as we were, we had no fear, even of an uncivil word. As the population of the place was Hindoo, musicians were beating their drums and twanging the vina in front of an old palace, ornamented with colour and carving—a relic of other days. Afzul Khan probably lived in it when he was governor of the Wai district. His gallant train would have found ample accommodation in its vast courts and galleries.

In the one long street of the bazaar, throngs of men were walking up and down; while women and children, grouped under the verandahs, made the air resound with their shrill cries. People were making purchases at the open stalls. A knot of girls, gaudily attired, were buying strings of jessamine, and crowns of yellow flowers, destined to set off the great knot of glossy black hair raised upon their shapely heads. Handsome creatures they looked as they stood in the red glare of a cresset, flaming with cotton-seed steeped in oil. Numbers of white-robed votaries were wending their way to prayer. We peeped into no less than five temples, catching sight of long aisles of pillars, lit at the top by small lamps. At the end of these vistas were brilliantly-illuminated shrines, before which men in the attitude of prayer were performing puja. Most of these halls had been mosques, but it was now the turn of the Hindoo.

Before taking our well-earned rest, arrangements had to be made for an expedition that we were to make on the morrow. It was to

see a famous banyan-tree, with one exception the largest in India. The tonga was to be at the door by half-past six.

Desirous to take leave of the river, for in the afternoon we were to continue our journey, I was up with the dawn; for the proverb of "the early bird" is particularly applicable to India.

A strange scene, that I should not have seen later in the day, presented itself on the opposite side of the river. Some women going through one of their forms of puja. Three of them were walking, with quick and even step, round the hollow bole of an ancient banyan-tree. The foremost one wore a red sari, the second was clad in white, the third in purple. After watching them for some time, their movements acquired a kind of fascination for me, and I began to count the number of turns they completed, and, taking out my watch to time their march, found they made eight circles in a minute. A strange woman joined in. At the end of a quarter of an hour, I left the red sari in possession of the field, still striding round with the same determined step. The poor

thing was probably seeking to obtain some boon from the spirit of the tree; most likely she was childless. The banyan-tree at Wairargarh was frequently visited in the old palanquin days, but now few people go near it, as it lies off the high road.

CHAPTER II.

Sculptured Stones—The Great Banyan-Tree—A Rude Shrine and its Priestesses—Palanquin Bearers—The Plateaux of Máhableshwur—Grandeur of the Scenery—Trees on the Hills—Prodigality of Nature in India—Venomous Snakes—The Whip Snake—Amusing Story of a Snake—Native Manner of Smelting Iron—Beautiful Sunsets—Wild-looking Natives—People of the Lower Konkan.

FOR the first five miles this road, though uninteresting, was good, but it afterwards became indifferent, and was at last so bad that we had to frequently jump off the tonga—so often, indeed, that we decided finally upon leaving it, and making our way across the country to the object of our expedition, which we could now see in the distance, a great symmetrical oval of green. First, however, we stepped into the precincts of a village temple

shaded by a mariamma-tree (sacred to the goddess of villages). Lying under it were some of those stones sculptured with the simple annals of the Máhratta warrior, that tell their story so well. The building was insignificant, but a fine deepdan stood before it. Our weary way led over the jowari (millet) fields, the harvest of which had been garnered, but the tall canes and the rustling leaves make excellent fodder, and had been left to dry. Many a nullah riven by the floods had to be crossed, but, to cheer us on, the great tree loomed out larger and larger before us. When we reached its grateful shade we threw ourselves panting on the ground. At first, to our dazzled eyes, all was dim, but gradually we could distinguish the leafy vaults and the contorted pillars. The parent tree no longer exists. It was cut down, and a temple was built in the midst of the wood that had sprung from it.

In its turn it had to yield to time, the avenger. It was desecrated by some deed of blood (the place has always been the resort of robbers and evil-doers), and pulled down. On

its site there stands a hut in which squats an idol greasy with libations, and a heap of stones, with other rudely-carved divinities. We were standing examining the place, when suddenly we saw three tall women advancing towards us, the priestesses of this rude shrine, two of whom bore lamps, while the third carried a brass tray, on which was a box containing red powder, for the benefit of such people as might desire to renew the sectarial mark upon the forehead. We offered them some pieces of money, which they accepted, and then silently withdrew. We wandered in the gloom, opening our eyes upon a weird world.

With the exception of the grotesquely human form assumed by the mandrake, there is no tree so fantastic in its growth as the banyan. Here a root curled up like some old-world reptile ready to spring, there lay another many limbed and grey, a vegetable alligator. Great ships might have ridden at anchor by the ropes twined about and suspended from bough to bough. Some of the huge limbs thrown out

were too heavy to support their own weight, and then that cunning workman, nature, had stepped in and thrown down, at the extreme end of the bough, a stout, perpendicular, and most effective prop. The silence that reigned was profound. The place favoured strange fancies. We caught sight of but one living thing, the streaming white feathers of a bird of Paradise flycatcher (the phantom bird), which tossed a somersault and was gone. It would have driven an imaginative person mad to have passed a lone moonlight night in that place of delusions. Although this miniature forest appeared in many parts to consist of solitary trees, on examination they all proved to be connected together. We were glad to leave its eerie twilight for the bright sunshine of the outer world.

According to Lady Falkland, the exact area shaded by this famous tree is computed by careful measurement to be three acres and three quarters.* It is the largest known, with the exception of a banyan-tree that grows on the

* See "Chow, Chow," by Lady Falkland, vol. i, p. 208.

banks of the Nerbudda, ten miles above Broach, which covers close upon four acres.

It was not more than twenty miles from Wai to Máhableshwur, but it is an up-hill road. The mode of progression was one new to me. The carriage came to the door drawn by eighteen men, decently dressed, with very large turbans. Ropes were attached to the vehicle, and they ranged themselves three abreast, fifteen to pull and three to push. The road was good, the gradient easy, and the pace was equal to what it would have been had we been drawn by horses. Ten miles were accomplished in this manner, during which the men never flagged. Occasionally one of them would fall out, or ease his position by changing places with a comrade. The men in their prime take the heaviest share of the work, sparing those that are old, and training the youths to their vocation. They are, I believe, a caste, the palanquin bearers of former days, and it is probably for the sake of affording them employment that this mode of mounting the ghât is adopted, for the road is by no means too steep for horses.

When within a mile of the place where their labours were to terminate, the band struck up a wild chaunt, which fell soothingly upon the ear. Two of the words employed were constantly repeated, "Ráma, ráma, venegráma." This hymn is one frequently heard in several districts when the labour of the day is drawing to a conclusion. Their task finished, they looked at us longingly. They were very grateful for the two rupees bestowed upon them. It was not much when divided, but Europeans can scarcely realize the importance of the smallest sum to a peasant. There are many who are literally too poor to buy salt for their porridge. Each man would receive for the trip a sum equal to sixpence, and that is about the daily pay of a ryot.

We got out to look about us several times. Wai, with its sacred river and its temples, was in sight for nearly two miles, but we wound round a great spur of hill, and lost it. The road that doubled the ravines was blasted from the rock. Above it the old palanquin-path was occasionally to be traced; apparently it seemed

only a path fit for a goat to tread. The scenery of the pass is fine, although the very extent of hill and valley embraced by the eye lessens the general effect. It possessed, nevertheless, a peculiar grandeur and interest. The wide plain lay like a map at our feet; there was the silver Krishna wending through it, passing by grey villages and irrigated pastures, divided by a net-work of trickling streams. The flat land is a *cul-de-sac*, locked up by mountains that formed a succession of jutting headlands. It was impossible not to admire the skill and daring with which every available inch of ground on their steep sides was cultivated, and the care with which the little rills from above were made to trickle down, and water shelves where long grass was waving, to be cut for fodder and for thatching. Sometimes the precipitous scarps defied the foot of the ordinary cultivator, but they had taught the brave mawulee how to climb. Punch-guni, where the horses awaited us, a pretty, primitive little place, with a number of cottages and gardens, is a little settlement of

army-pensioners. The old men cultivate fruit and rear pigs and poultry, and their wives let lodgings; simple accommodation acceptable to the families of clerks, people employed upon the railway, etc.

There are a few better houses, surrounded by beautiful clumps of the bamboo, which is here lost sight of. These abodes are also let, and there is a little, very neat Badminton ground. But when all its charms are enumerated, even that of a fine but barren view, it remains the very abode of dulness.

Punch-guni is scarcely nine miles from Máhableshwur, yet, wonderful to relate, the difference in the rain-fall of these places is often as much as two hundred inches, and sometimes it is more considerable; that registered at the former place seldom exceeds fifty inches, while that of the latter will vary from two hundred and fifty to above three hundred. Many a cloud, heavily charged with water, driven over the Indian Ocean by the monsoon winds, first meets with opposition in the mighty scarps of Máhableshwur, and the

shock causes it to discharge itself with inconceivable violence.

Our onward road still ascended. The vast, unfamiliar plateaux, steeped in exquisite moonlight, were most beautiful, yet the impression they imparted was that of sadness. It was almost a relief when, within a couple of miles of our destination, we caught sight of the lake, made by the swelling Yena, as it lay shimmering in the embrace of curving slopes. Another half-hour, and, turning off the road and up an avenue of unusual length, we drew up before the house at "Wood Lawns."

The plateaux of Máhableshwur (*i.e.*, the Lord of Great Strength) are situated on the Máhadeo Hills, which form the highest part of the Syhdaree range. When gods walked the earth, so says the legend, they reached to heaven. Since then they have been weathered down, but they are still sufficiently elevated to afford to us mortals a cool and invigorating climate. Their highest point is about four thousand seven hundred feet above the sea level. The brave European that first, in the

year 1820, made his way through the virgin jungles, was a General Lodwick, who, unarmed and accompanied only by his dog, reached the jutting brow of a tremendous scarp, where he stood awe-struck regarding the scene before him. Headland upon headland, consisting of masses of black basalt, trended away both north and south; whilst at his feet a mountain world was spread which the force of countless monsoons had worn into every conceivable shape. Enchanted by the prospect, he returned to the spot next day. Without his knowledge, he was tracked by a tiger, which carried off his faithful companion from his side.

The country at that time belonged to the Raja of Sattara, a lineal descendant of the great Sivajee. This gentleman, being on terms of friendship with the Governor of Bombay, at his request made the country over to the English in exchange for territory on the eastern side of the Syhdaree range. A small bazaar was established, and a few modest bungalows were erected, some three miles south of the native village of Máhableshwur, so

famous among Hindoos for the sanctity of its ancient temples.

I was up and threading the jungle paths in the very grey of the morning, struck by the European sounds made by the woodland songsters. I had not heard such joyous bird-singing for many a day. I felt awe-struck as endless green slopes, black precipices, and range upon range of mountain (from one spot eleven can be counted), met my eye. The scenery was of so solemn a character, and on so vast a scale, that it impressed me with a sense of my own insignificance, and no after familiarity with "the eternal hills" tended to lessen this depressing sensation. The children were delighted with their experiences; they had followed one of the green ways that run for miles through the woods. First they saw a jungle-cock, that gave a crow, and then went crashing through the leaves in its heavy flight; then they came upon a little bákery, a small deer, that paused for a moment and immediately bounded away.

To sit in the evening by the bright wood

fire was to enjoy wonderland.* The deciduous jungles, in this the winter of their year, were ragged and gloomy. They are principally composed of the jambool (*syzygium jambolanum*), which is so prevalent that it is believed, with one or two other trees, to have covered the whole surface of these hills. It shoots up in clustered boles, and the tortuous branches are furnished with glassy, pointed leaves which form a lumpy, round head. When free-growing, and not smothered, as it generally is by its neighbour, the fruit hangs down in bunches like grapes. It is harvest-time for the birds when it ripens. The natives also are partial to it. When brought down by the wind, it is so abundant that it carpets the ground with purple. The pesha (I am acquainted only with its native name) is another large tree that is plentiful. Its whorls of leaves

* Our ascent was accompanied by a considerable change of temperature, it being ascertained that in India the temperature of the air falls 1° for every three hundred feet of elevation. See Note on Darjeeling, Thornton's "Gazetteer," compiled for Honourable Court of Directors, &c., East Indies.

are tea-green on the upper surface, but underneath they are white and downy. Though ugly in itself, the pesha makes a pleasing variety of tint. Inferior in size, but far more beautiful, is a large shrub which attains the size of a tree below the ghâts, the *memecylon tintorium*. It bears tiny bunches of bright blue, and sometimes violet, flowers that gem its stems. A fine dye is extracted from them. The leaf resembles that of the camellia. The oombur, one of the fig tribe, is remarkable for its bole, covered with green moss, in which ferns and orchids nestle. It exhales moisture abundantly, and its shade is very grateful.

The prodigality of nature was displayed in the great abundance of small trees that bore solitary flowers of a pretty buff colour, which were succeeded by apples so closely resembling the guava, both in appearance and smell, that the idea of making them into tarts was seriously entertained, but was not, however, carried out, as the fruit was said to be a strong narcotic, used by poachers to hocus fish. Another shrub, quite as plentiful, had milky

leaves and a blossom and a downy ball set with little tubular flowers of a dull yellow tint. The great flag-like leaves of the *circuma caulina*, sold in the bazaars as Máhableshwur arrowroot, were dying down. It was November, and its stiff plume of green-tinted flowers was replaced by brilliant flame-coloured spikes of seed, growing after the manner of Indian corn. It is the ivory root of this plant that yields the flour. Europeans sometimes prepare it, but not even bribery, which in times of famine has been resorted to in order to induce the natives to use it, will make them eat it. Some people imagine that they are deterred by the time it takes to free the substance from some pernicious quality; but "patient India" does not shrink from quiet labour, and probably the real reason of its rejection as an article of food lies in the fact that it contains little or no nourishment, and that the people, having a great deal of knowledge respecting their vegetable productions, are quite aware of it.

The wild tobacco of these jungles attains a height of four or five feet, the stem shooting up

high above the lanceolate leaves, and throwing out branching arms that are studded with insignificent little tubular flowers. When green the leaf has no smell, but when dried the odour is strong. It is sold in bundles, and much used by the natives. A curious plant, the *bryophylum calicynum,* is found occasionally in moist and shady spots. It grows in large clumps, throwing up slender stems, from which droop a number of lilac-tinged bladders which, when pressed, go off with a pop. The succulent leaf, shaped like that of the strawberry, is its most remarkable feature. If hung up against a wall, every indentation in its scolloped margin throws out a shoot. Many of these perish, but those that survive become perfect plants, which in a state of nature, when about two inches long, drop off, and root themselves in the ground. One of these leaves, sent by letter to England, and properly treated, will sprout with becoming vigour. The handsome *crotalaria juncea,* the fibre of which makes excellent hemp, grew in great profusion. It has a bright green, oval leaf, with a strong main-rib, and throws up a

splendid spike of yellow flowers. The tall fern, *pteris aquilina*, also loves the open ground, completely concealing the people treading the narrow paths cut through it, and affording a cover much appreciated by wild beasts.

The jungle products named above with care, but not with the skill of a botanist, are those that at first sight attract the attention of the stranger, but the scientific investigator will be rewarded by finding a wonderful variety of vegetable forms. It is useless to seek for pretty flowers in the eternal twilight of these jungles; and climbers never blossom as a rule before they reach the sunshine. We were puzzled to account for the presence of innumerable tiny paths under the trees, but at last, to our surprise, we found that they were made by the porcupines in their nocturnal promenades. We never saw any of them, but they left other indications of their presence in the shape of quills strewn about, many of which we collected with the intention of having little boxes ornamented, and pen-holders made of them.

In our rambles, the dread of snakes made us tread with caution on the thick beds of fallen leaves. We scarcely ever caught sight of these wary reptiles, but at one period we picked up numbers of the silvery inverted skins that they had cast off. There are only two deadly venomous species to be found about Máhableshwur: the cobra and the fierce little kupper, whose bite is said by the natives to begin with death. It was formerly believed that the kupper would bite the cobra, and that death would ensue in half an hour, but recent experiments go far to prove that venomous snakes cannot inflict a fatal wound on one another. On one occasion I saw that the attention of my four-footed friends, the "Brown Brothers," who always accompanied me in my rambles, was keenly attracted by some object on the ground. It was a long snake of a beautiful green colour, which was transfixed in a semi-erect position; suddenly it gave a spring, caught hold of the bough of a tree with its tail, gave another dart, and disappeared. This creature, commonly called the "whip-snake," from its resembling the

lash of a coach-whip, insidiously conceals itself among the branches of trees, from whence it darts rapidly on the cattle grazing below, generally at the eye.

Government places five pounds a month, during part of the year, with the superintendent of the place, to be given in rewards for the destruction of this reptile, at the rate of twopence half-penny for the most venomous, and a little less for others. The number brought to him is so great that the sum is generally exhausted during the first three or four days. The reptiles, looking like dirty striped ribbons, are laid in his verandah. The task of examining and counting them is said to be very disgusting. The snake-finders are exceedingly troublesome, and surreptitiously pull down the boundary and other walls in order to unearth them. These creatures are far from shunning the haunts of man, an increase of population by no means tending to decrease their number. A full-grown cobra yields half a tea-spoonful of poison, a fluid which is said to aid the process of its digestion, like the ordinary saliva of other species.

An amusing story is told about a snake at Máteran. On one occásion a large cobra was shot there, and its stomach found to be distended with the eggs of a guinea-fowl, whose nest it had plundered. Several of the eggs were quite whole, and one had the shell so little injured by the gastric juice that it was thought worth while to remove it, and give it in charge to a brooding hen along with her own. In due time the chicken appeared, and, under the name of Jonah, took its place among the rest of the brood.

In India the head of the cobra is frequently worn as a charm. Early in the morning the mongoose and its family, creatures which can be easily tamed, might be seen sunning themselves on the warm red banks. It is the ash-coloured ichneumon, worshipped by the ancient Egyptians. It will kill and eat the most poisonous snake with satisfaction and impunity, but at times it seeks vegetable food, and this has given rise to the notion that in so doing it seeks an antidote for the poison of the serpent.

The peacock, which contrives to swallow a

snake of almost incredible magnitude, and of the most poisonous nature, does so with impunity.

The numerous and excellent roads about Máhableshwur are kept up by a heavy tax laid upon the horses and carriages brought up the hill. Driving, however, is not always pleasant, for there is scarcely twenty yards of level ground in the place, and some of the inclinations are very steep. The profound precipices are little guarded. In this winter of the year the bright red hue of the soil was very cheering, but it was sadly detrimental to the purity of gloves, bonnets, and such like vanities. It is full of iron, which the natives smelt in their primitive manner. The furnace they use is raised three or four feet above the ground, and beneath it is a hollow some eight inches or a foot in depth, and lined with fine clay. Two bellows, each made of a single goat-skin, with a bamboo nozzle, the two nozzles meeting in a clay pipe, are employed to supply blast. The iron smelted, when red hot is cut through the middle in order to show the quality of the mass,

then cooled down, and sold to the blacksmiths, who forge it into bars.

These bars are rough and full of cracks. To make steel they are cut into small pieces and packed closely in a crucible with a tenth part of dried wood chopped small. The iron and wood are then covered over with one or two green leaves. Care is taken to exclude the air. The wood always selected is that of the *cassia auriculata*, the leaf is that of the *asclepias gigantea*, or, when that is not to be had, the *convolvulus laurifolis*. The crucibles are then built up in the form of an arch, and the blast kept up without intermission for about two hours and a half. When cool the crucibles are broken, and the steel is taken out in a cake. The natives prepare the cakes for being drawn out into bars by exposing them to heat just short of that sufficient to melt. When specimens of Indian steel were first examined by English chemists, they found themselves quite unable to discover the process by which it had been manufactured. The article from which the above is abstracted goes on to say:

"The antiquity of the Indian process of making steel is no less astonishing than ingenious. We can hardly doubt that the tools with which the Egyptians covered their obelisks and temples of Porphyry and Spenite were made of Indian steel."* Mr. Furgusson remarks the striking similarities which exist between the Dravidian temples, many of which stand on the southern coast of India, and those of Egypt.† May not the ancient trade in iron and steel between the two countries explain it?‡ "The celebrated Damascene blades," says Mr. Manning, "have been traced to the workshops of Western India. The figuring of these swords is found to depend upon a mode of crystallization called wootz, which is the name given in India to manufactured steel."

The principal roads lead to the great headlands, or "points," as they are called, where people meet of an afternoon to converse, to

* See Journal Royal Asiatic Society, vol. v, p. 390.

† See Furgusson's "Indian and Eastern Architecture," p. 378.

‡ See Manning's "Ancient and Mediæval India," vol. ii, p. 365.

admire the magnificent scenery of the Higher and Lower Konkan, and to obtain a refreshing glimpse of the Indian Ocean. My first visit to this spot was made just as the sun in crimson glory dropped down into the sea. The hazy tints of golden amethyst that lingered about the mountain depths were indescribably beautiful.

"What is that lone crag?" I demanded of a lady who was well acquainted with the scenery.

"Oh!" she replied, "that is the castle where that horrid man did something to that other horrid man with those shocking things!" and she put out her fingers so as to indicate claws.

"Wagnuks," I exclaimed, "and that is far-famed Pertabgurh."

During the dull months when the cold, dry winds blustered, the sunsets were the redeeming charm of the place, a foretaste of "the better land." No spot commanded a finer view of the departing day than our own verandah. Sometimes the orb set in peaceful beauty against a clear background of tender green and violet. Sometimes its beams would suddenly

rend the leaden masses of cloud that concealed the sea horizon, and shoot up flaming like some great volcano. Early in the morning the sea, that lay more than *thirty miles* away, was misty and blue; but in the evening it was crimson, like the sky. With the naked eye ships could be distinguished on its bosom. On one occasion, just as the great solar disc touched the water, a black object, no bigger than a man's hand, passed across it—a ship voyaging to gather pearls and spices on far shores. In India there is a bewitching beauty in "the parting hour," but finest of all was it to see a great lone planet all aflame in the deep orange of the after-glow. Those people are, however, mistaken who look upon the land itself as one of colour. Its principal characteristic—at least, in the tropical part of the country—is monotony. It is true that there are flowers of gorgeous hue, birds of brilliant plumage, insects of glorious sheen; but they are the exception, and not the rule. Most members of its fauna and its flora, for their better protection, take the various browns of the scorched ferns and grasses, the

neutral tint of sand or rock, or the dull green of the jungle. Spreading over an extent of several miles, the bungalows of Máhableshwur —there are but eighty when all are numbered —lie buried in the woods, and at this season f the year very few, not above half-a-dozen of hem, were occupied. It was very lonely, and he days were so short that the dusk caught us n our afternoon drives even before the horses' eads were turned towards home.

With the exception of the traders who live in he little bazaar, no natives live on the plateaux. he homes of the peasants lie deep down in the lue ravines. When the day is over, they trot own in bands to their grey villages. Then any a woman of easy gait might be seen alancing on her head a shallow basket, over he edge of which a tiny hand would dangle, a pair of vigorous legs kick the air. A few ore months, and the child would be riding tride upon the mother's hip. It was some ne before we got accustomed to a trick the ople had of keeping up behind the carriage. ey were the mildest of peasants, but the ap-

pearance they presented was ferocious as they pursued us in the gathering darkness, their faces hidden by the dark brown cumlie, or blanket, that also concealed their persons, and in their hands they carried the long, stout staves they use to steady their steps in descending the almost perpendicular paths. Poor things, they are terribly afraid of the lurking wild beasts, and they were happy for a moment in the glimmer of the carriage-lamps and the sound of the wheels.

The region stretching from the foot of the Syhdaree range to the summit of the ridge facing the east is called the Kon Kan Ghât Mâhta. This was the country of the Mawulees, by whose means the Máhratta power first gathered head in the fortresses of the Deccan. The Hukurees, famous as marksmen, came from "the land of the sunset," the western side of the range. Both of these peoples possessed an extraordinary facility for climbing, and could mount a precipice or scale a rock with ease which men of other countries would not have attempted, or probably have been dashed

pieces. The people of the Lower Konkan, the plain of rolling ridges that stretches to the sea, are small and dark, with possibly a tinge of African blood in their veins; for an African colony was established on "the pirate coast" by the Wurzees, a line of non-hereditary Abyssinians, naval officers, to whom the Kings of Beejapur granted possession of the strong island of Jingeera, with adjacent lands, under condition that they should protect the marine trade of the state.* There is also a considerable Mohammedan population below the ghâts, descendants of those who gained possession of the country by the sword, and it is ranged over by many wandering tribes. The greater part of the recruiting for the Bombay Army is carried on in the Konkan.

About Christmas we were led to expect unwelcome visits from the tigers and panthers, in which the lower country abounds. At this time of year the long grass in the valleys is cut, or

* The British merchants were at one time desirous of exchanging the island of Bombagi, where they felt very insecure, for the storm-swept rock and fortress of Jingeera.

dies down, thus destroying the cover and putting to flight the small game on which these animals satisfy their hunger when nothing larger is to be got. The first intimation we received of their presence was from a lady who had been paying us an afternoon visit. She sent back a card, on which was written, "Tie up your dogs, and take care, for I have just seen a panther in your drive." This was not pleasant news, for the two drives that led through the grounds up to the house were long and lonely.

The domain consisted of thirty acres, and of another thirty that could not be built over, a good part of which was jungle. For many weeks such creatures were frequently seen about, and it was a morning's amusement to track their steps. Once the stride of a large tigress, with a cub by her side, was followed to a village three miles off. The horses in the half-open stables would kick and neigh in the middle of the night, and then all the dogs began to bark. The stable people lived in a perpetual state of apprehension, the buffalo-boys conjured

up a dozen improbable stories; but the bravest person in or about the house would not have ventured out after dusk alone, or in company without a light.

CHAPTER III.

Prowling Tigers and Panthers—The Jackal—Indian Workmen—Favourite Places of Resort—Indian Washermen—Genealogy and Birth of Sivajee—The Hoole Festival—Curious Marriage Contract—The Mawules and Sivajee—Sivajee's Ambition—Murder of the Raj of Jowlee—Sack of Jowlee—Murder of Afzul Khan.

OUR grounds were the particular haunt of wild animals; for among the trees under the terrace was a dripping-well that formed a pool, familiarly called "The Tiger's Well," the only open piece of water in the neighbourhood. Every visitor to Máhableshwur is acquainted with the tiger-path that runs past it.

The following year, when, for some unknown reason, wild animals were very numerous, we were seriously annoyed. Late one evening we were startled by hearing a loud cry in the

den. "Where are the dogs?" was the exclamation, as we rushed out. At the mouth of the ravine, under the datura hedge, one of the brown brothers, Drake, was found bleeding, with his jowl torn and a tooth knocked out. He had evidently been attacked by some wild beast; unable to grapple with so powerful an animal. Whilst succouring him another cry was heard. "Where is Stumpy?" our fusileer (a scion of the Royal 7th). Alas, there was no reply; curiosity had induced our pet to venture far into the wood, and we never recovered him. To their great disgust, our favourites were chained up. It was a necessary precaution; for on four successive nights the same sort of cry was heard, and some dog about the premises was reported to be missing. The stablemen declared that they often caught sight of some light-coloured creature gliding among the bushes; and, returning from our drive in the deep dusk, something, apparently nearly white, coursed across the road under the very noses of the frightened horses. Beaters were unable to get over the creature's haunts (their range is so

wide); but it evidently looked upon our domain as a kind of larder. Loaded guns were placed ready for instant use; the trap was set and baited, but still the nuisance continued. How thankful was I to be roused in the middle of the night by the report of a musket, and to hear a voice call out, "We have got him at last. A panther, almost white with age; come and see." It proved to be what would have been called, if a Tiger, a man-eating beast, a creature reduced to desperation by not being able to pull down its accustomed food.

Besides these rovers, we had a resident wolf, a shaggy creature with a bushy tail. He would peep at us from the thick bracken, but he was a harmless fellow, a bachelor. We were acquainted with another wolf that had a wife and family. The presence of these beasts led to many minor inconveniences. Every gentleman in India, when he dines out, is waited upon by his own servant, else, as things are arranged, small would be his share of the feast; a these servants, when the grounds they have pass through are of evil repute, insist u

staying all night, unless it happens that they can return in a band.

The idea of these animals being about took away the pleasant sense of security that we had hitherto enjoyed in our rambles. At the same time we were aware that a tiger very seldom wantonly attacks a human being, unless it be old, toothless, or diseased, a "man-eater" unable to pull down an ox or a buffalo. It is believed that such creatures have a horror of the smell of man.*

One morning I had a fright. I had betaken myself to a quiet shady spot in order to read my English letters undisturbed, when suddenly the tall ferns near me waved ominously, and something brown began to move through them. Down went the packet, my heart stopped beat-

* Solitary beasts are very dangerous. "A single tigress caused the destruction of thirteen villages, when the inhabitants of two hundred and fifty-six square miles of country were deprived of the means of subsistence. In 1869 one tigress killed one hundred and twenty-seven people, and stopped the public road for many weeks, and a man-eater, still in the Mallai forest, is said to have destroyed one hundred people." See "The Prince's Guide Book," p. 86.

ing, and great was my sense of relief when a couple of plump, nut-brown jackals ran up, paused for a moment, and then scudded away. The jackal is sometimes, but very rarely, found to have a small horn upon the head, not above half an inch high, and concealed in the bushy hair. It consists of a spike of bone, covered with a sheath of horny skin. This appendage is much coveted by Hindoos, who regard it as a talisman, the possession of which will ensure an extraordinary share of good luck. There is a specimen to be seen in the College of Surgeons in London, but the two parts, the sheath and the horn, have not belonged to the same animal.

The jackal plays an important part in Indian fable. It is held sacred as the form assumed by the goddess Durga, when she carried the infant Kishna across a river, the god being pursued by his enemies. All the worshippers of the female divinities adore this animal, and present offerings to it. The worshipper lays the offerings on a clean plate in his house, and calls the god to come and partake of them. As this

lone at the hour when the jackals leave their
rking-places, one of these animals sometimes
mes and eats the food in the presence of the
orshippers. In the temples dedicated to
rga and other divinities a stone image of the
kal is placed on a pedestal and daily wor-
ipped. When a jackal passes a Hindoo the
tter must bow to it; and, if it passes on the
t hand, it is a lucky omen. It was some-
mes a relief to turn from Nature in her gran-
ur and seek some homely spot. To one place
e often repaired, carrying with us books,
iting materials, and pencils. A babbling
ing gushed out of the dry bed of a torrent.
e turned the black boulder-stones into seats
d tables, and there we sat in the chequered
ade, generally very silent. We heard many
warbling song and curious call, and strange
iards would peep from under the dry leaves,
k steadily at us, and rustle away. There
s a real English willow-tree and a blackberry
h, and common ferns, and the clear, shallow
am was green with water-cresses, which we
hered and took home for breakfast. These
e golden hours.

Occasionally I strayed to a cleared spo
at a little distance where the primitive tum
brils, with solid wooden wheels, would com
and carry off the stone quarried near. He
the patient oxen and buffaloes would
happy in the shade; quiet, well-treated cr
tures, never beaten, but sometimes address
in a strain of vituperation, a kind of Hind
swearing, into which the name of Ráma w
frequently introduced. Sometimes I sat a
watched the quarriers working away at t
great rounded lumps of basalt brought do
ages ago from some vanished mountain. "I
tient India" sat drilling away with rude inst
ments of iron. One man was shaping a sh
or pillar, just as his ancestors might have dc
a thousand years before him. The workm
gentle and well-mannered men, would b
away in couples the heavy cubes of stone slu
to a pole, each holding in his hand a stout st
to steady his step. One poor fellow, who
blind, appeared to pursue his calling with
difficulty. It was gratifying to see him t
gaining his daily bread. The weight car

must have been enormous, the blocks of basalt being a foot long and a foot and a half high, bound together in couples by means of jungle ropes cut from the climbing plants. On one occasion the stout pole of iron wood broke into pieces, and the burden it was supporting crashed down, but the "native rope" did not give way; it was finally heaved up on to the back of a man, a poor creature slight of frame and with remarkably small feet, who carried it for a distance of two hundred yards to the mart.

Another favourite resort, not too lonely, was by the side of a proud little stream that danced among great tufts of flowering ferns, all unconscious that it was about to dash over the brink of a precipice to a strange bed in a deep valley. There were still pools which the insects skimmed over, and little bits of boggy ground which appeared of a yellow and blue hue, in consequence of the multitudes of tiny flowers by which they were overgrown, the delight of the butterflies, and of a certain purple dragon-fly, with a red head and gauzy wings, and also of

the yellow streaked wag-tail, that most confiding of birds.

The upper part of the stream was used by the dhobies, or washermen. There once a week two or three families would repair and set up their shining vessels of brass under the shadow trees, tethering the cows that were used more as beasts of burden than for the production of milk, which was supplied by the pretty white goats that were also of the party. It was an amusing always, supposing that your own clothes were not there to be operated upon, to watch the proceedings of these people. The great bundles of linen would be opened and thrown down upon the half submerged rocks and upon them the men and boys would set to work in good earnest; now and then a strapping young woman would kilt her sari and be help; they stood opposite to each other in pairs each armed with a heavy club, secured in some loose manner to the wrist, which they used after the manner of a flail. It was necessary to keep time, one club descending with a heavy thud at the exact moment when the other was

igh in the air. Alas for the linen so pum-
nelled! No wonder that "dhobie day" (the
ay on which it is returned) should be a day of
nentation all over India. It is pleasant, how-
er, to see the clothes spread out to dry and
whiten in the purifying sunshine. The caste
the dhobie forbids his use of animal soap, for
hich a number of mineral and vegetable sub-
ances are substituted.

It is amusing to find the ancients suffering
om "the dhobie worry." In the code of
enu* we read of the punishment awarded to
washerman who mixes the clothes of one
rson with those of another, or allows anyone
t the owner to wear them."

The women repair to the lower part of the
eam in order to wash their spare saris, which
ey rinse, expose them for a few minutes to
e sun, throw them over them when half dry,
l gather the long length into plaits too in-
cate to be described, tucking in one corner

* Sir William Jones places the highest date of the Insti-
s of Menu at twelve hundred and eighty years before
birth of Christ.

of the vestment so as to secure the whole. O
one occasion a pretty young woman, who cam
down to make her toilette, tucked up her hand
some sari (she had numbers of silver ornamen
and was probably on her way to some villa
entertainment), and, picking up a smooth stor
she proceeded to rub down her shapely brow
limbs, after which she got a little stick ar
commenced upon her teeth, a process fro
which I turned away. Hindoos consider th
the cleaning of the teeth is a kind of religio
necessity, a thing to do in public, and be prou
of. They are directed by their laws, duri
the operation, to sit down on a clean a
moderate-sized seat, placed on ground purifi
by some small ceremony, and "make gurglin
with the mouth either to the east or wes
Early in the morning the entire population of
village may be seen gurgling in this way, a
the sight is far from agreeable.

A sight of the falling stream could only
obtained from one of the dizzy spurs of r
characteristic of the scenery, which jutted
like the prow of some great ironclad.

ompanion, who was fond of the view to be btained from this hazardous spot, would oc- sionally find there an offering made by some us hand to the goddess of the waterfall; plantain, a heap or two of sugar, or a few eet-smelling flowers strung upon a thread. e of the *euphorbiaceæ (briedelia spinosa)* grew plentifully as to give quite a peculiar charac- to the precipitous descents. Leafless during great part of the year, it throws out its anches like a candelabrum. They assume a ral form, but the angular edges are nobbed, minding one of the gothic iron-work in some Spanish cathedral. One, and I believe it is s species of the shrub, is, in the months of y and June, planted by Hindoos, and wor- pped as the representation of Máwra, the ddess of serpents. The *enphorbia antiquorum* supposed to ward off lightning, and is often t in tubs or pots on the tops of native ses. Towards the head a great barrier of alt dammed up the ravine, and, in conse- nce, rich soil had accumulated, and the rising nd from its brink was terraced and laid

out in gardens, every available ledge bein
carefully cultivated by Chinamen, the mo
patient of gardeners. At one time they we
very numerous upon the hill, but, owing to th
thievish propensities, their ranks have be
thinned. This tendency on their part is n
surprising, as they are the sons and grandso
of convicts. All the robberies in Máhableshw
—and they are by no means few—are ascrib
to them, but still the long pigtails and t
broad hats are to be seen among the stra
berries and the peas. The Hindoos, who ha
the Celestials, declare that a defunct Chinam
has never been seen, and aver that they see
their dead in milk and eat them.

Sheltered from every cold blast here,
palm-tree nodded its head, and there w
hedges in which the double pink rose predo
nated over the green leaves. I believe the r
that grows in this country, which is to be fou
in the most obscure places, is indigenous.
solitary stood the great hollow bowl of a
tree that had been pollarded. It was prob
an object of veneration, to be thus preser

To its shade I often repaired with my book, turning to the historical scenes depicted in it, scenes that render this country so interesting, connected as it is with the romantic history of the Máhratta hero, Sivajee. A slight sketch of his personal life may not be unacceptable to the English reader. If it should be so it is easily skipped. It may seem superfluous to commence with a period so remote as that when his grandparents were childless, but their way of proceeding under the trying deprivation is a curious illustration of Hindoo manners.

The Bhonslays claimed to be descended from the Rajas of Chittore, who traced their lineage from Porus, whom Alexander overthrew in his famous invasion of India. Mallojee Bhonslay, grandfather of Sivajee, had no children for [illegible] eral years, which is considered a great misfortune amongst Hindoos. He was a rigid [illegible] ary of the deity Mahdeo, and of the goddess [illegible] wanee, and both were invoked in vain to [illegible] him an heir; so a celebrated Mohammedan [illegible] t or pîr, named Shah Shureff, was engaged [illegible] ffer up prayers to this desirable end. In

due time Mallojee's wife gave birth to a son, and, out of gratitude to the pîr, the child was named after him Shah, with the Máhratta addjunct jee. Shahjee became a remarkably fine boy, and on the occasion of the Hoolee festival in the year 1599, when five years old, he accompanied his father to the house of Jadow Rao, the principal Máhratta chief in the service of the Ahmednugger State.

It is usual for all castes of Hindoos to meet on this occasion at the residence of some principal person on the fifth day of the festival, and the children frequently accompany their father to the place of assembly. Shahjee, on this occasion, was noticed by Jadow Rao, who goodnaturedly called the boy towards him, and seated him next to his daughter Jeejee, a pretty child of three years old. The children began to play together, when Jadow Rao, in the fulness of his heart, thoughtlessly asked his daughter, "Well, girl, wilt thou take this boy as thy husband?" and continued in the same strain, "They are a fine pair."

The children at this moment threw some

powder, a common amusement at this festival, ver one another, which occasioned a great eal of mirth in the assembly. This mirth, owever, was disturbed by Mallojee Bhonslay's ing up and saying, "Take notice, friends; dow has this day become a contracting party h me in marriage." To which some of those esent assented, but Jadow was astonished d mute. There was much opposition, especi- on the part of the proud wife of Jadow, to idea of having a son-in-law thus foisted n them. Neither parent would consent. t Mallojee was crafty; he returned to his llage, and pretended that Bhowanee had dis- vered to him a great treasure, at the same ne saying, "There shall be one of thy family ho shall become a king, and his posterity shall ount the throne for twenty-seven genera- ns." The idea of such prosperity, backed by alth, can well rule events. Mallojee was sed to the command of five thousand horse, h the title of Raja Bhonslay, and the mar- of his son was celebrated with great , and honoured by the presence of the

Sultan of Beejapur.* The result of this marriage was the birth of two sons, Sumbajee and Sivajee. It was, unfortunately, not a happy one. He is said to have taken a dislike to Sivajee's mother, on account of the hatred she bore to her father. Shahjee took another wife, and sent Jeejee Bye (Bye signifies lady) and the younger son, Sivajee, to reside at Poona, under the care of a steward called Dadajee Konedeo, who took care of certain lands granted by him, among which were the Mawul valleys. This kind man endeavoured to ameliorate the condition of the Mawulees, who, although active and to defend themselves against wild beasts, were destitute of clothing, and nearly starving. A number of them were retained in his service, and from these circumstances probably arose the strong attachment of the Mawulees to Sivajee, that so materially influenced his future circumstances. The boy was entrusted to their care during his hunting expeditions. Not unlikely could we look down upon from Mahuli

* For this pretty story, see Grant-Duff's "History of the Máhrattas," p. 41. One volume edition.

to which they [illegible]

ll could we see that th[illegible]he is said to have murdered
climb.* He roved abo[illegible]les of the wagnuck, or
reaching like the wily tiger and, is well [illegible]
in valleys," until he had stolen into a situation
hence he could at once spring upon his prey,
d possess himself of supreme power over the
hrattas.

n order to clear his way to a throne, Sivajee
no doubt guilty of some atrocious deeds.
e worst of his acts was the treacherous
rder of the Raja of Jowlee. The story may
briefly related, as the place lies directly under
scarps of Máhableshwur. On both sides of
Syhdaree range this chief had large
ssessions, and to gain at least a part of them
essential to the fructification of Sivajee's
ns of aggrandisement. He held his troops
ady for any chance that might occur.
eanwhile he despatched two agents, a
rahmin and a Máhratta, accompanied by
enty-five Mawlees to Jowlee, in order to
y out the land, but ostensibly to arrange a
[illegible] between himself and the daughter of

missaries were
al interviews with
us guard. Perceiving the
74 LIFE te to his master proposing
assassinate Chunder Rao and his brother. T
plan had Sivajee's assent. Troops were sent
the ghâts, and Sivajee, who pretended to
otherwise engaged, made a night march
Máhableshwur village, where his troops we
assembled in the jungles. All being ready,
agents demanded a final interview, in wh
they stabbed the Raja and his brother. Havi
secured their flight, they hid themselves in
thickets where the army awaited them.

Before the consternation caused by this
deed had subsided, Jowlee was attacked on
sides. Sivajee sacked the place and to
possession of the adjacent territory and fo
This event occurred in the year 1655. Th
years later we find Sivajee courteously pr
viding for the comfort of the Peejapur Gener
Afzul Khan, who, backed by a large army, h
been sent to look after him. How he entic
the Khan to meet him on the green slope bel

and how he is said to have murdered
curved blades of the wagnucks, or
claws, hid in his hand, is well known.
Mhruttas, however, believe a different
of the story. They affirm that Afzul
attacked Sivajee, and that their hero
him in self-defence. Sivajee's crimes
the outcome of the times in which he
the circumstances in which he was
Such virtues as he possessed were his
in advance of the period in which he

was not naturally cruel. His usual
to his prisoners, his respect for
whom he carefully guarded from
many an enemy escaped him by putting
female attire), and his deep love for his
are well known. In domestic life his
were pleasing and his address was

man of small stature, but his
was handsome and intelligent;
long arms in proportion to his
reckoned a beauty among the

Máhrattas. The history of Sivajee throws a halo of romance over the lonely Syhdaree their ruined forts, and the wonderful countr spread at their feet.

CHAPTER IV.

table Productions—Conjunction of Venus with the Moon—The Bulbul—Some Birds of India—Play of "The Necklace"—The Mantis—The Indian Bee—Spiders—Protection of Houses during the Monsoon—The Bazaar—Mediums of Exchange—Immense Pods offered for Sale—Gipsies—Government School for Boys—Indian Children.

RCH is the season of spring in these ions; the garden was ablaze with of the ordinary sort to be seen in . As far as vegetation was concerned, ard flight had carried us many a degree he Isles of the West. The heliotrope, verbenas, with a very sweet per- and fuschias flourished luxuriantly. ura, here a large shrub, sheltering the the garden, which had a considerable

drop, threw out every six weeks a profusion
large white bells. Along the terrace a hed
of roses covered with blossoms grew at its
sweet will. Some plants that we had brou
with us did very well. Vegetable producti
will often bear an ascent, but, taken down f
the hills to the plains, they almost invari
perish; or, if they live, degenerate. The yo
shoots of the jambool, which tinged the l
scape with purple, were in maturity, a lo
green. The prevalence, however, of the
produced a monotonous effect. The fine
sets were no more, and mists all but conce
the sea, signs of the brooding monsoon
would break out at last into such fierce tem
But nature has always compensation to

The nights were enchanting. We
one exclaim, "What has night to
sleep?" Towards the time of the fu
so luminous was the light it shed that
of small print could be read with ease b
eyes, and the colour of the flowers was
ceptible as it had been at noonday. On
we enjoyed a fine sight, the conjunct

us with the moon. The beautiful planet a brief period appeared to perch on the hern horn of the crescent, and then she ued her declining path, touched the light , and flashed out superb scintillations of nd green, finally changing into a glowing re she sank below the horizon. When the was young the effect of that curious ap- nce called "the earth-shine" was very strik- From the tips of the crescent the circle was leted as by a gold wire, the space within, luminated in the same way, being of a r glowing grey tint.*

his "earth-shine," the cause of which was, if I mis- not, discovered by Michael Angelo, is but faintly, if at en in England. It is more visible in Scotland, where, ding to the old ballad, it was considered to be a sign ming evil. Everyone will remember the warning in it to Sir Patrick Spence:—

"Late, late yestreen, I saw the new moon,
Wi' the auld moon in his arme,
And I feir, I feir, my dear master,
That we shall come to harm."

ly Longfellow must have had the Scottish ballad in nd when he wrote "The Wreck of the *Hesperus*," s words of similar import into the mouth of the ilor."

The jungle trees burst into blossom, nearly all of them being fertilized by the w the flowers were insignificant and all colourless. The bees, however, sought the w starred jessamine, which had a very s perfume.

Among the climbing plants were the gra pepper-vine *(piper nigrum)*, that does not for culinary purposes up the hills, the wa Hoya, and the cissus. By the kindness friend, we were introduced to another cli that had a remarkable property. If the of two or three of its leaves was allowe moisten the palate, sugar could not be t for the following two or three hours. A spoonful of the brown sort put into the m had no more sweet effect than if so much s had been introduced. The fact was remark but that it should ever have been discover still more strange.

We missed the great variety of beautiful such as had rejoiced our hearts further s but we had the favourite bulbul *(hypetes g*

), and some few others. It was the black
ul which bred in the garden, where the neat
nests were hidden in the rose hedge.
eggs were of a pinkish hue, and spotted
red. We used often to peep at the callow
s, but we kept their secret. They are
y sought after and sold to the Zenanas.
caged they imitate the note of other
They are by nature very pugnacious,
n some parts of India, are kept for fight-
I expected to hear from them a beautiful
but was disappointed, for they are in no
onnected with the famous bulbul of Persia.
are, however, very pretty, with a little
ed black crest, a sharp bill, and a great
ch of red under the tail.

e were always pleased to catch a glimpse
bird of Paradise flycatcher *(ichitrea para-*
288), the "phantom" we had seen at
gah. The two long feathers of the tail
ry remarkable. The colour of the fe-
nd of the young males is a light chestnut,

numbers refer to Jerdon's "Birds of India."

but that of the perfect male is white. The change from chestnut to white is effected by a "chemical" process, that is, the colour changes after the feather is fully formed. It would haunt the same tree for days, but it was necessary to be very still in order to see it at all.

The most charming bird on the hill was the Malabar whistling thrush (*myophonus horsfieldii*, 342). Its note was very melodious. The "lazy schoolboy" well deserves its name. I sat and listened to it until one almost expected to see a little urchin with a satchel on his back break through the ferns. I was partial to the Malabar crow-pheasant (*centropus rufipennis*, 217), a very handsome bird, and so tame when it takes up its residence that it will come and walk about the verandah. Its head and neck were glossy with purple and green, and its chestnut wings, smooth and bright. On the hills it was but a bird of passage; for a couple of days we had a family of five in the shrubbery calling to one another with their loud whoop.

There was a black robin (*thamnobia*

with whom I was great friends. It lived
small bush by the dhobies' waterfall. I had
to make a certain sound, and it would
chirping about in a most familiar manner.
ny love of the feathered race is carrying
o far. I must pass over many another
rite, and make mention only of the myna
lotheres tristis, 684). It is about the size of a
n, and by no means pretty. The bill and
re yellow, and the plumage dusky brown.
some white flesh about the eyelid that is
ularly ugly. The bird loves human so-
and can be taught to follow its master
t like a dog. It catches the sounds of
ds quickly, and can articulate them pretty
rly, and it is very amusing to sit under some
where they congregate, and listen to their
ersation, which is exactly like hoarse talk-
It is sacred to Ram Deo, on whose hand
s, and the natives are very fond of it.
an old drama that was translated by Pro-
Wilson, entitled "The Necklace," * the

is play is attributed to King Harsha, of Kashmire,
his love for poets, actors, and dancers, squandered

myna plays an important part. A king co
into his garden in order to enjoy the frolic
the spring festival; he asks "if the murmu
hears is that of the delicate feet of the
against the stem of the asoka-tree?" "
says his attendant, "it is not the bees, it
queen with her train approaching." One
ladies is the beautiful Princess Ságárika, w
the queen wishes to keep out of sigh
account of her loveliness, and she bids
retrace her steps and look after her fav
myna. The young lady feigns to comply
only retreats behind a jessamine bush
forms a bower, from whence she regards
king, whom at first sight she takes to be
god of love.

In the next act, Ságárika is discovered in
bower painting a likeness of the king,
whom she has fallen in love. She is rallie
a friend who takes the picture and adds

not only his own money, but the riches, the gold and
vessels belonging to the temples, and even the very
of the images, which led to an insurrection in w
perished. He reigned between 1113 and 1126.

likeness of the princess. A conversation
nes, and the friend promises not to betray
tender sentiments of Ságárika, adding, "It
uch more likely that this prattling bird in
age above will betray us."

e princess becomes agitated, and her friend
her with lotus leaves. Suddenly the
els are interrupted. The monkey has
ed from the stables, and, rattling the ends
is broken chain, clatters along "as if a
ber of female feet, bound with tinkling
ets, were in sportive motion." A universal
e of confusion ensues; the eunuchs run
y, the dwarf takes shelter in the pocket of
chamberlain, and the princess and her
nd fly and hide themselves in a tamarind
ve.

leanwhile the monkey breaks the cage of
myna in order to get at the curds and
y. At the noise the king enters, and, find-
the picture, gazes at it with delight. "Fly,
says his attendant; "there is a goblin in
r tree." The king listens and calls his
a simpleton. "The voice," he says, "is

distinct and sweet, like the voice of a woman, but, from its small, sharp tone, it must be that of a starling." "Listen," says the king. They stand and listen, and make out that some one, who has portrayed the king as the god of love, is enamoured of him, but fears lest her love should not be returned. The friend is amused and says, "How the jade chatters to-day! I declare she speaks in measure like a Brahmin skilled in the four Vedas." The king laughs, and, clapping his hands in mirth, frightens the bird, which flies away, and we hear no more of the myna.

The play is full of the most charming imagery and allusions to Nature, but the *dénouement* is not satisfactory according to our English notions. The queen, in her jealousy, puts Ságárika in chains, but is at last obliged to produce her and to acknowledge her as a sister. (The new wife of a Hindoo prince is spoken of as sister to the previous wife.) "Well, madam," asks the king, "how shall we dispose of the princess?" The queen, taking the damsel by the hand, replies, "Accept Ságárika, my lord,"

upon which the king (unkindest cut of all) takes the lovely princess by the hand, saying, "Who would not prize the favours of the queen?" And the curtain falls upon the mischief caused by the loquacity of the myna.

There were very few butterflies, but one splendid creature was a host in itself. It had a span of six inches between the tips of the wings, which were marked with velvety curves of black filled in with an exquisite colour partaking both of blue and green. On one occasion four of these insects were to be seen hovering over the cup of a great crimson hibiscus. It was a charming sight.* Of all insects, surely the mantis is the most wonderful. There were many of that common sort that go by the familiar name of "the prophet's camel." But one species was quite new to us. It was only upon the closest scrutiny that it could be distinguished from the leaf of the crotolia, on which

* It has now become quite a fashion in India to print off butterflies' wings. People are not in general aware that the insect will travel well by post, if the wings are carefully folded and the antennæ turned between them and the body.

it was to be found. It aped the oval form of the leaf, the strong main-rib, the delicate veining, and the stalk was perfectly imitated by the projecting fore-legs, which were stretched out together. Near the heel of the leaf, on close inspection, a minute pair of eyes could be perceived; under this covering was concealed the body of the insect, with filmy wings, and claws ornamented by tiny knobs like gold. There is nothing in Nature more curious than these imitative insects.

In Sir Emmerson Tennant's "Ceylon" he gives an account, illustrated by an engraving, of the excrement of a species of mantis that exactly corresponded with the fluted form of the seed of the plant on which it lived. The wasp was numerously represented; one of them, a creature more than an inch long, persevered under difficulties, and made its nest upon my writing table. It was amusing to see it fly in, its legs covered with damp, red mud. I gave orders that it should not be disturbed, in spite of which the foundations of its nest were more than once swept away; but at last it formed a per-

fect little *chatty* pot-like that of the country, and into this it dropped its eggs, and finally introduced some small caterpillars, sealed the vessel with wet mud, flew away, and was seen no more. The common Indian bee is rather small, and of a brownish colour. I suffered a strange persecution from some of them: They took a fancy to my bed-room, and, perhaps mistaking it for the twelve foot space left for ventilation between the iron roofing, in they swarmed in hundreds. It was impossible to shut them out, for, as is the case in many Indian houses, the room received its light through doorways which were always open. The chamber being very lofty, it was impossible to dislodge them; the humming was incessant, and, as I got stung several times, it was as unpleasant as it would have been to have taken up one's residence in a bee-hive. After some time, honey began to flow down the walls from above in ten different streams. At last a pool was formed in the middle of the floor, and all the insects in the place came to partake of the delicacy. The nuisance became intolerable, and I had to

abandon the room to bee-takers and white-washers. Combs, by which we profited, were formed in many places on the premises, and we observed that the men who took them were never stung, although the insects swarmed about them.

Asking to what this immunity was owing, they replied, "Observe, and you will see that we never take the honey but on a cloudy day, and then the bees are more or less torpid." The scholar, Dr. Wilson, was nearly—along with a friend—stung to death by bees, to which they had offered no provocation. In describing the onset to a friend, he writes, "'They compassed me about like bees,' is one of the appropriate figures of the Psalmist." In these cases violent vomiting ensued from the poison of the stings.

A singular species of spider (the long-legged *phylangium*) haunted the bath-rooms. The creature had a body the size and shape of a pill, and, when complete, eight long legs, and a ninth appendage, probably a feeler, no thicker than thread. They congregated together, presenting much the appearance of a bunch of horse-

hair sprinkled with currants. On one occasion one of these clouds fell upon me whilst bathing, I scarcely felt either it or the flight over me of the insects, who scampered away and were gone in a moment. A small, flat-headed leech, which had the habit of curling itself and darting on its prey, was a less pleasant visitor. It was dislodged from the skin with some difficulty. I confess, however, to being interested and amused in watching these creatures.

Nature sets the example, and the outside world awakes to life. The church disclosed its red walls, and opened its doors. The cases of dried straw in which the houses had been enshrined since the previous July were taken down. The roofing of chupper (a thick thatch of teak leaves and long grass, bound down by canes of bamboo and withes, was examined. This chuppering is very expensive, but nothing else except iron can stand the continual beating of the sheets of water that descend during the monsoon. Iron is not only an expensive material, but requires the experience of a good architect to be advantageously mixed with

wood. There was a little market where timber of moderate size and materials for chuppering were sold. The teak leaves, some sixteen inches long, and broad in proportion, were brought in carefully packed in bundles, which dangled from the ends of a bamboo pole, slung over the shoulder, Chinese fashion. Many an up hill mile did the jungle folk trot with their loads. The wild, eager men were the bargainers, the women, with their naked, unkempt children, sat chattering on a low wall, forming a primitive and not unpleasant scene.

Further on was the bazaar, a clean and pretty place, where provisions and simple luxuries were sold at a somewhat dear rate. The broad road was bordered by fine trees; the gaily-painted houses they sheltered were shut up during great part of the year. Early in the morning the bazaar presented a busy scene. In one spot different sorts of grain and baskets full of salt were set out; in another, fruit, vegetables, and a great variety of nuts. In a little corner a peasant dispensed inches of sugarcane to eager children. A shed, filled with piles of

glittering glass bangles of every hue, was beset by women. Grave old men sat on their heèls in the shade, each with a cloth before him, on which were laid heaps of copper money and cowrie-shells. The coins were either Portuguese, with the royal castles almost obliterated, or thick lumps of metal marked with Máhratta characters, the expiring currency of Sivajee. The Raja was a proud man when he held in his hand the first of the race.

When the Mohammedans penetrated into Southern India, they are said to have found there no coined money. Bullion was employed in large transactions, but shells were the medium of exchange in smaller ones, and they are still used by the very poor. Cowries are also useful as medicine. After being steeped in limejuice, they are calcined, and the powder is given as a remedy for dyspepsia. Hundreds of sacks of these shells are annually exported to the western coast of India from the Laccadive Islands. The strangest object offered for sale is an immense pod, which often attains a length of four feet, and may be as many inches in

breadth. It has all the appearance of being made of brown leather, neatly stitched round the scolloped sides and between each seed. There are about a dozen beans in each pod—large, ruddy brown, shining, and very hard. They are bought by the dhobies, who use them for fluting frills. It is the product of quite a small tree—a sort of acacia. A handsome Nág-stone, but evidently of modern construction, stood at the end of the bazaar, where it was set under a jambool, doing duty for the sacred pipal, which will not grow in so elevated a situation.

Among other wild tribes, gipsies might be seen loitering about, strange figures. One little girl was clad in rags, so disposed as to exhibit a very handsome embossed silver disc, as large as a cheese-plate, that covered the stomach. At a little distance was the Government school for boys. I made my way into the presence of the handsome master and his bright-eyed scholars. They looked very intelligent—more so than European lads of the same age would have done; but, after the age of nine or ten

years, the intellectual faculties of these little Easterns are said to diminish rather than to increase. The casteless children of the shoemakers sat on a mat in a corner by themselves.

CHAPTER V.

A Sunday Stroll—Drive to Sidney Point—View of Elphinstone Point—Alarmed by a Tiger—Society at Máhableshwur—Riding Parties—The Parsees—Costly Costume of the Ladies—A Gentleman of the Vieille Roche—Excursions in the Neighbourhood—Peruvian Bark—The Cow's Mouth—Legend of Máhadeo—Fort of Rainee.

"LET us take a drive and a quiet stroll," was the proposal one Sunday afternoon. I willingly assented, but was not quite easy when I found myself on the way to Sidney Point, for the road was steep, and lay along the brink of a precipice. In some places it was quite unprotected, and the Arabs, gentle though they were, could be frisky. I was thankful when I found myself standing on the safe side of a slippery plateau. "Now we will walk from

Dan to Beersheba," as the signboard facetiously calls the path that is cut through the jungle on the steep side of the mountain. This was a new source of distress. "Come along, and take my arm," continued my resolute companion. It was my fate, and I consented. I steadily turned my eyes away from the misty depths of the blue valley below, and gazed at the red bank and the silver ferns until the most dangerous spots were left behind; then I went on my way rejoicing, scenting the aromatic perfumes, watching the gambols of the squirrels, and talking to the birds.

We paused to look back upon Elphinstone Point. Vast jungles of jambool-trees in the fresh green of their springtide swept down to its verge, and the rough face of the basaltic scarp was golden with shaggy patches of dried grass. Again we stopped to watch the crimson sun disappear behind purple Pertabgurh. The path became more and more beautiful as we advanced, but it was very lonely; the brown brothers, even the practical Stumpy, had deserted us, but we could hear their voices, which

sounded strange in the distance; presently they returned, with drooping ears, and tails between their legs. The short Indian twilight was stealing on.

"We ought to be returning, but I must show you a table and chair that some one has been at the pains to have cut out of a rock."

"Very well," I replied, "but I must stop to gather some of the orange-coloured lichen on that huge boulder."

My companion disappeared behind it. I heard a loud scream, and rushed forward, almost into the arms with which she motioned me back. She was deadly pale.

"A tiger!" she gasped, "and close to us!"

Instinctively we turned and ran at our utmost speed, and did not stop till we were sure that the danger was over, and my companion then told me the story of what had happened.

"On turning the rock where I left you," she said, "I saw a light-coloured object moving in the wood. I thought that it was a white buffalo-calf until I observed the undulating motions of the creature. A few yards from me

it stopped, and lifted one of its paws, and then I saw what it was by its stripes, and the cruel, yellow eyes that were fixed on me. I felt as though I had received a blow. A flood of thoughts rushed through my brain; disappointment at the animal's lack of beauty, admiration that at this season its protective tint should so exactly resemble that of the dried herbage of the jungle. A dozen stories of G——'s Shikar adventures passed through my mind in a second, and then I turned and fled."

The dogs had, in all probability, roused the tiger; and no doubt his presence was the cause of their strangely subdued manner.

We had to be cautious, for it was getting dark, and there was no moon. The very rustling of the leaves startled us. We feared to see those cruel eyes peering at us from behind the bushes, and then we ran again, in order to be cheered by the sound of our own footsteps. We were so agitated, and our nerves were so excited, that the mile and a half we had to go seemed endless. What a relief it was when we caught sight of the flashing lights of

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the carriage lamps. Early on the following morning we returned to the scene of our adventure, accompanied by an experienced tracker. The creature's foot-prints could be traced in spots where the sand was loose; and, judging from the stride, it must have been a large animal.

The days flew by, bringing with them carriages laden with ladies and children, and tongas full of gentlemen; for Máhableshwur is the largest and most fashionable summer resort in all India. In the early morning crimson-coated puttha-wallers and dusky ayahs were to be seen marching troops of children along the shady paths. One native family had a negress at the head of their nursery, and a strapping, yellow-skinned Chinese woman as wet-nurse. She wore the costume of her country, even to the flower in her elaborately-dressed hair, and looked as if she had just marched off a tea-tray. Driving was not made more agreeable by the ladies in ulsters and felt hats, who drove very fast, and got occasionally confused as to the proper side of the road. The pretty young

ladies were in their glory, with high-heeled boots never meant for climbing, and poles of bamboo that might have sufficed to steady the steps of a member of the Alpine Club.

Large riding parties, in which the horses had it much their own way, were made up, and the fair equestrians went dashing along in clouds of red dust. Picnics were organized to visit difficult and distant spots; these would take up the whole of the afternoon, and part of the night, if there chanced to be a moon. The bachelors gave sylvan dances, and there were strawberry parties in the early evening, generally given upon the slope of some precipitous hill that could only be reached by clambering up the boulder-strewn bed of a winter torrent, and there was perpetual lawn-tennis and badminton, the cause of much strife. How hard these votaries of pleasure worked at their villegiatura! Still it cannot be denied that some of these entertainments were very amusing. At sunset a band would play at one of the points, and it was pleasant by turns to listen, to talk to friends, and look over the blue valley and

through the gaps in the mountains to the misty sea-line; the rosy sunsets and the crimson afterglow were past delights.

The presence of numbers of Parsees added much to the brilliancy of these gatherings. It is the custom of this people to assemble many branches of a family under the same roof, and they all take their airing at a concerted time. It was not unusual to see two or three showy coaches, exactly alike, drawn up together, the servants' liveries scarlet and gold, and the Persian horses, superb creatures, singularly large, and of a white or a fine dapple grey colour. One carriage would be full to overflowing with young girls, often very pretty, with almond-shaped eyes and well-formed, but somewhat broad features. The matrons drove together. "The tall, the athletic, the valiant Parsees," as one of their slokas (hymns) dubs them, are a handsome race, but their sly expression detracts from their good looks, and they have an early tendency to corpulence. The dress of the ladies is rich and elegant, but it only becomes slight figures, and very few

such are to be seen. They wear silk drawers and an embroidered bodice, over which is draped a sari that is passed over the head. This is generally made of lustrous silk or satin of vivid hue; some also, of fainter colour, are exquisitely beautiful. It is often embroidered in silk and gold. Parsee women are adepts in needlework. For full dress, the sari is deeply fringed with gold lace. Rich or poor, they adorn themselves with numerous ornaments, and many of the ladies possess fine diamonds. Under this costly costume they wear, like the men, "the sacred shirt," which is made of linen or gauze, and also the sacred cord, with which children are solemnly invested when they attain the age of six years and three months. The hair and great part of the forehead are concealed under a linen band or head-binder, the ends of which serve to tie the hair, which is knotted up at the back of the head; an arrangement which is in accordance with religious rule, but has a disfiguring effect.

Bevies of Parsee ladies may be seen walking together. Their really beautiful costume is

often spoiled by their wearing English boots of the clumsiest description, and their gait is about as graceful as that of a flock of penguins. In Bombay, however, they use embroidered slippers without heels, quite unfitted for out-of-door work. They have entirely adopted the English stocking. The gentlemen dress as Europeans, with the exception of still retaining the hideous Guzerat hat of two folds, which policy induced them to adopt on first entering India. It is made of oiled or glazed cloth, and rises a foot above the forehead. There is a cavity or hollow behind into which they sometimes put a bunch of flowers, which, as they can neither see it nor inhale its fragrance, must be so placed with the benevolent idea of pleasing those that walk behind them. The little children, particularly the boys, are active and joyous, and as gaudy as butterflies; but the girls are bundled up after the fashion of their mothers.

I was curious to learn the name of a tall, sallow young man who used to drive up in an open carriage with two gentlemen who occupied the back seat. He was somewhat restless,

his legs apparently being troublesome to him, and he would at times draw them up and sit on his hams. No one knew who he was, but it so happened that the Governor gave a large garden-party at Bella-Vista, and the first person that met my eye was the young Hindoo, who, as he stood, presented a dignified appearance. In his right hand he held a sword with a scabbard of crimson velvet and gold, and his neck was encircled by rows of six loops of alternate pearls and emeralds. I took a fancy to the face of this gentleman, although it had a somewhat sly expression. He was of the Vielle-roche, one of the few remaining Máhratta noblemen, and had large estates near the Bhor Ghât. My informant had occasionally to look into his affairs, and he declared that he was a man of excellent character. His wife, a pretty and gentle woman, was the daughter of a native gentleman who was a member of the Governor's council. "When I visit there," said my friend, "the old man brings her in to see me; but this does not always please her husband." Early the following morning the

young chief went down to Wai, where he was taken ill of cholera, and, dying in two hours, his body was burnt by six in the evening. Alas, for the poor young widow!

There are many interesting excursions to be made in the neighbourhood of Máhableshwur. One of them is to visit the Peruvian bark *(chinchona)* plantations, or rather the place where they were intended to be. Some years ago Government expended a very large sum in laying these gardens out in the manner of those that have proved so successful at Ootacammund, in the Madras Presidency. The spot fixed upon, Lingámála—doubtless, from its name, an ancient place of pilgrimage—is about eight miles from Máhableshwur, to the east; a sheltered spot, where the monsoon rains are as moderate as at Punch-Guni. A charming climate, a constant supply of water, and a good quality of soil, promised well for the undertaking; but, alas! when all was completed, most expensive buildings erected, and terraces formed and planted with no less than twenty thousand chinchona plants, besides coffee shrubs and fruit-trees, it

was found that there was not sufficient soil to nourish them. The experiment was an utter failure, and the place was abandoned.

Still the decaying plantations are worth visiting, and one afternoon, riding and driving, we set off for Lingamála. The way leading to it, which passes the lake, is very pretty; but the hills around it have been sadly bared by the charcoal-burners. In this country wood, when cut down, is very difficult to rear again, as unprotected soil is soon washed away from the rock by the weight of the rain that falls. The tank was made at great expense by the last Raja of Sattara, who threw a bund across the river Yéna. Clearing its boundary, the stream resumes its natural course; swift and smooth, it kept us company, with willows bending over it, and splendid clumps of the *osmundi regalia* and other ferns dabbling on its brink.

The fields that slope gently to it are highly cultivated by Chinamen, and the women raise the water in buckets by means of huge wooden levers. The ground, partitioned out into small

square spaces a little below the level of the soil, could be irrigated at pleasure. These spaces were green with strawberry plants, salads, &c., and the young potatoes for which Máhableshwur is celebrated. The gardens are hedged in by the straggling Neilgherry raspberry-bush. We walked the last mile under difficulties, the path being narrow, and the Gordon setters (the brown brothers) and Cock Robin, a pet horse that came along with us, its reins knotted up, considered themselves entitled to the best part of the road. First we came to a long stretch of orchard-ground. There were apple and pear-trees that bore fruit no bigger than marbles, and quite as hard, and peaches that looked like green almonds.* The plantain alone was at home, and flourished accordingly. More than one stream had to be crossed by means of stepping-stones, half hidden by bushes —tigerish-looking places, where the dogs were called to heel, much to their disgust, for they were dashing about after the grey jungle-fowl

* At this time I was not aware that botanists believe the wild almond to be the parent of the peach.

(*gallus sonneratii*, 813). The great experiment had been tried in a kind of punch-bowl. Terrace rose above terrace, bearing miserable, starved chinchona-trees and coffee shrubs, among which the jungle was attempting to resume its sway. The undergrowth, which had been lately fired, was still more desolate, and many of the trees were reduced to blackened skeletons.

Among those that had escaped the conflagration were two or three different species of chinchona. One of them bore a broad-ribbed leaf, something like that of the filbert; another was long, and pointed, and glazed; the latter in decay assumed the beautiful red colour of the Virginian creeper. At Chinchona, which lies in the valley of the Casipi, it attains the size of a large forest-tree; but in Peru there are fifty trees and bushes of which the *quina*, or bark, is used. They do not, however, flourish together, but grow at different elevations. We broke some of the leaves and branches, tasted them, and found the flavour bitter, especially of the sorts grown in the East Indies. In India the

chinchona of Ceylon fetches the highest price, but that from Ooctacammund is also profitable.

Quinine of a good quality is never prepared in India. The raw material is sent to England, and the precipitate, when returned, will often sell for thirty-two shillings the ounce. The whole place was ruined. The tall chimney of the house, from whence the warm vapour had been distributed over the forcing-pits, was tumbling down, and the boilers and pipes had been torn away. The handsome bungalow of the superintendent, once a very bower of roses, was shut up, and the garden, that had been full of rare and beautiful flowers, was turning into a wilderness. Here were the remains of a myrtle hedge, there a poinsettia in the embrace of a cruel jungle-climber. A passion-flower, with lovely white sweet-scented blossoms, lay on the ground. It requires no Shelley to tell how sad is the sight of a neglected garden; the melancholy appearance of the tall casaurina pines was in unison with the scene of desolation as they shivered and moaned in the evening breeze.

On another occasion, we drove to the holy spot crowned by the temples of Máhableshwur, and the "Cow's Mouth," standing on an isolated plateau, one of the highest elevations of the Syhadree range. Legend has it that on this spot Máhadeo fought and killed five demons, from whose bodies flow the five rivers that burst from the hill. There is said to be a sixth river, but it is never visible except to the eyes of the most holy ascetics. The most important source seen by ordinary mortals is that of the Lady Krishna (in Hindoo parlance all rivers are of the feminine gender). The next is the Yéna, which, seeking to join her, braves a perpendicular fall of five hundred feet, a glorious sight, it is said, during the monsoon, when sometimes the most brilliant prismatic colours tinge her misty garments. Then comes the clear Koina, which also flows into the Krishna. Joined by many a tributary stream, on roll the demon-born waters, bubbling and sparkling past many an ancient temple, many a holy shrine, cleaving asunder the diamond fields of Golconda in their impetuous haste to mingle

their waters with that of the ocean in the Bay of Bengal.

The Krishna drains an area of ninety-four thousand, five hundred square miles. The other rivers, the Sawitri (*i.e.*, the sun), and the Gawatri, have ploughed boulder-strewn beds through the thick jungles and flow down to the west. The romance of their lives is soon over, as, joining in a prosaic marriage, they form the estuary by means of which merchandize in large quantities finds its way to the foot of the ghâts, to be carted over the hills and distributed in the Deccan. No wonder that the plateau, which has given birth to so romantic and useful a progeny, should become a holy spot.

A mile from the Cow's Mouth we were waylaid by a troop of white-robed Brahmins eager as spiders after flies, anxious to show us the place and finger our rupees. We were first taken to a building of modern date, about as picturesque in its exterior as a covered in meat market. We entered the interior, a hall; dark corridors, supported by wooden pillars, ran round it, dismal recesses in which the gods are

said to lurk, and one of them, I think it is Krishna, sleeps there. Its centre was occupied by the pool in which the devout Hindoo of Western India desires above all things to bathe. It was turbid and scum-stained by the frequent acts of devotion, but pure as crystal was the stream that supplied it, flowing in a fine jet from the mouth of a colossal cow's head carved in stone, the water being conducted from the subterranean source which gives birth to the five sisters and to the ghostly stream. The temples, built of large blocks of basalt, weather-stained and grim, had no exterior beauty to recommend them, they were covered in by deep-pitched roofings of stone slabs, most unpicturesquely daubed with whitewash, a blot in the landscape seen from miles around.

One of these temples is of a great age. We were only allowed to peep into its interior, which appeared to be very extensive. A dark, greasy, villanous-looking place it was. A young woman was engaged in trimming lamps: one of those wretched widows that have to choose between a menial position in their family

or the service of the temple, where such unfortunates are entirely in the hands of the priests. The fate of these unhappy creatures is so terrible that it is not surprising they should, when permitted, have chosen the alternative of death, and prefer to be the heroine of an hour, smothered in flowers, and to pass from the ashes of the funeral pile, as it was believed, to the arms of the husband so bravely followed.

The view from the spot where the temple stood was very grand. The Yéna had, in the lapse of ages, worn a way through the very heart of the hard rock, exposing arid precipices where not the smallest herb could grow. To the west the dense green jungles swept down, and, meeting in the hollow between Elphinstone and Sidney Points, arched over the bed of the Sawitri. In those very thickets Sivajee's Mawulees had lurked, eagerly awaiting the signal that was to loose them upon Jowlee. Down that very ravine, did the doomed army of Beejapur struggle to meet its fate. On the very stone on which I was resting may not Sivajee have sat brooding over his meditated

treachery. He spent the night of Chunder Rao's murder upon this spot.

Elphinstone Point is the most terrible of the scarps that face the sea. A small space has been levelled at its extreme end, and there the lover of Nature repairs at the sunset hour, or by the bright moonlight, to enjoy a prospect said, by many a traveller, to be in its way unique. The mountainous country that it commands teems with historical associations. To the right frowns Reishwar, a stretch of savage black rocks said to be inaccessible to the most expert of European climbers; but that is to be doubted. The eye looks immediately down upon ridges of reef-like rocks, so old, so vexed, so sharp that the black eagle of the country alone treads their summit. In one part they form a curve, embracing a rugged rock with a small fort upon it called Chundergurh.

The British troops found there two English officers that had been in captivity for years. During the period of their imprisonment, their sorrowful eyes could never have seen the blush of the sunrise, or have looked upon a single

green thing. To the north rise a confused mass of mountains and precipices, the heights of which are crowned by some of the most famous Máhratta forts. As if set upon the tip of a mighty horn rises Torna, one of the first strongholds surprised by Sivajee. No one knows to what race it owes its birth, but, when digging up some ruins in its interior, the young adventurer accidentally discovered a quantity of gold that had been buried at some remote period. This piece of good fortune was attributed to a miracle worked in his favour by Bhowanee, the tutelary goddess of his family. However he came by it, it enabled him to purchase arms and ammunition, and the surplus was employed in the erection of a fort called Morhbudh, three miles east of Torna. When finished, he made it his capital, and called it Rajgurh. With the aid of a glass, the fortifications could be clearly traced. It was one of the strongest forts in India, and was manned by a thousand Arabs. To Rajgurh the wife of the last Peishwa was sent for her better security during the troubles in Poona. It was invested

by the English in the year 1817, and a passport was offered for the free passage of the lady through the troops. She was not, however, allowed by her husband to leave the place, but, when a shell set fire to her palace, she had sufficient influence with the killedar to induce him to capitulate. The conditions under which the garrison agreed to evacuate were the preservation of their arms and property, permission to the killedar and his attendants to reside at Poona, and to Bajee's wife likewise permission to pass with her followers to Poona,* and she was much pleased at having an escort of her own camels and elephants offered to her by the English commander. The old historian Ferishta pithily remarks of Sivajee that "he built palaces and erected fortifications in every part of his country, and it seemed as if he had the art of seeing all hidden treasures, for, wherever his people were sent to make war, he directed them to spots where valuables were buried." †

* See "Memoirs of the operations of the British Army in India during the Máhratta War of 1817-9."

† See Scott's "History of the Deccan," vol. ii, p. 55.

. There are delightful old journals, of which I give the title below, that throw some light upon the proceedings of the Raja Sivajee at Rainee. The company sent ambassadors to his court, but when they arrived at the foot of the hill they learned that Seva-Gi "had departed thence to Pertabgurh to visit the shrine of Bowanee, a pagoda of great esteem with him, having carried with him several presents, and among the rest a lumbrico of pure gold, weighing forty-two pounds."

At last they set off for the castle, and "arrived at the top of that strong mountain, forsaking the humble clouds about sunset." The fort is described as very difficult of access, there being but one approach to it; the other sides are almost perpendicular precipices. "On the mountain are many strong buildings, as the raja's court and houses of other ministers, to the number of about three hundred. It is in length about two miles and a

Captain Scott, to whom we owe the translations of the work of Ferishta and other old chroniclers, was secretary to the Governor-general, Warren Hastings. His history of the Deccan was published in the year 1794.

half, but no pleasant trees or any sort of grain grows thereon."

The gentlemen had a long discourse with the ministers respecting trade, the right of wreckage cast upon the coast, and the presents that it was usual on such occasions to interchange. At last they were introduced to the great man himself. They "found the raja seated on a magnificent throne." After having fine garments put upon them they retired. "But they took notice that on each side of the throne there hung heads of gilded lances, two great fishes' heads with very large teeth, horses' tails, and a pair of gold scales, equally poised, an emblem of justice." They were told, "You may go," after the usual fashion. The poor ambassadors, during their negotiations, were half starved, and at last asked for meat, and it "was agreed that a butcher in the plain, who served a few 'Moors and Portuguese,' should supply them with half a goat a day. He had no other flesh." But the honest man was so much surprised that, though very old, he "made an adventure up the hill to have the sight of his

good masters who had taken off his hands more flesh in the time they had been there than he had sold in some years." *

The Englishmen were surprised at seeing elephants and horses in the fort, "which made them wonder how they had been brought up the hill, the passage being both difficult and hazardous."

In the distance rose a conical crag, blue in hue, on which, in ages past, another strong fort had been placed. This was taken by Sivajee, and he erected within it a palace, a complete set of public offices, and so strengthened the fortifications that they were considered to be impregnable. These works took some years to accomplish, and, when finished, the name of Rajgurh † was given to them. Thither Sivajee removed with his family and his possessions, and the place became the theatre of most romantic

* See "Travels in India in the Seventeenth Century," by Sir Thomas Roe and Dr. John Fryer. Trübner and Co., Ludgate Hill.

† The frequent repetition, the similitude of the names of places, and the habit of changing them to suit the whim of the possessor of the day is most puzzling to strangers.

events. The Máhratta was at this time deep in consultation with many learned Brahmins as to the propriety of his assuming ensigns of royalty, and establishing an era from the day he ascended the throne. A celebrated Shastrees (one learned in the Vedas and other Sanskrit works), of Benares, arrived at Rajgurh, of whose coming he pretended to have received information from Bowanee, and the holy man was appointed to conduct the inauguration ceremonies. After many solemn rites, and every religious observance which could make the ceremony reverenced by the Hindoos, Sivajee was enthroned at Rajgurh. About a fortnight later, on the death of his mother, Jeejee Bye, he was a second time placed upon the throne, and within its walls the great Raja expired in the year 1680, at the age of fifty-three. The personal wealth (of what marauding was it the fruits!) he left behind him was immense. "He had, without doubt," says Grant Duff, "several millions in specie at Rajgurh. His treasury, besides rupees, contained coins of every description: Spanish dollars, Venetian sequins, gold mohurs

of Hindostan, and pagodas of the Carnatic, ingots of gold and silver, cloth of gold, rich vessels, and jewels innumerable."*

Sivajee had four wives. Two of them were living at the time of his decease. Theirs was a sad fate: the youngest immolated herself, the other, Sajera Bye, intrigued in favour of the succession of her own son, and was put to a cruel and lingering death by Sumbajee Sivajee, heir by another wife. The Máhratta officers attached to her cause were beheaded, with the exception of one, who had made himself particularly obnoxious, and he was hurled down the steepest side of the precipice. Many other historical events too lengthy to relate occurred at Rajgurh. In 1818 this fort, supposed to be as impregnable as Gibraltar, surrendered to British troops commanded by Colonel Prother.

There are numerous picnics at Elphinstone Point, at which one of the amusements is to roll great stones over the brink of the precipice. They fall with a rushing sound, meeting with no obstacle until they reach the ground, at a

* See Grant Duff's "History of the Máhrattas," p. 133.

distance of more than two thousand feet. "In all the Alps," says Mrs. Somerville, in her "Physical Geography," "there is not a single rock with a perpendicular fall of sixteen hundred feet." Lately the bison—at one period plentiful—have deserted this region. Melancholy evidence of their former presence is recorded on a tomb in the Máhableshwur cemetery. A Captain Hinds, of the 4th Dragoons, was killed near Elphinstone Point by one of these beasts. He was a fine athletic fellow, but the bison bore him some distance on his horn, and is said to have dashed on with him as though he were a feather. The bison is the *gavæus gaurus* of naturalists.

CHAPTER VI.

A Tiger Shot—A Picturesque Scene—Skinning the Dead Tiger—A Native Superstition—Charms, Safeguards, and Antidotes—Loss of Life caused by Wild Animals in India—Dr. Livingstone's Experience—A Pleasure Excursion—A Mountain Road—Continuation of our Journey—Jack Fruit—Parr—Its Ancient Temples—Pertabgurh—War-cry of the Máhrattas.

IN one of his sporting expeditions G—— got a fine tigress. The beast, which had killed two buffaloes the night before, was shot near a pool of water in the thick jungle near Jowlee. It was slung to a pole and brought up the ghât in the afternoon. As M—— wished to make a sketch of it in oils, it was taken to a little holme under the terrace, and spread out amid the fern, with its head resting on its fore-legs as if asleep. The creature had a fine glossy skin. The form

was somewhat distended with the meal of the previous evening, for she had not only eaten a large portion of the flesh, but had lapped the blood of her victims.

M—— sat down to her easel. The news of the capture had spread. Friends came to look at the beautiful creature laid low, and numbers of folks from the bazaar came trooping up. Natives have a superstitious interest in the capture of a tiger. They formed a half-circle, their red turbans and white drapery standing out against a background of thick wood. The women and children came stealing up at a little distance. When assembled in the presence of Europeans the courteous manners of the Hindoo are seen to advantage. It was a picturesque scene. Behind M—— stood the tall and handsome Jew, G——'s writer, and the puttha-waller, with his badge of office.

"Solomon," cried G——, "would not you be glad to paint like that?"

"No," gravely replied the man, whose creed forbade him to make "the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath,

or in the water under the earth," and "amen," after his fashion, whispered the Mussulman by his side, muttering a verse from the Koran.

The sun set all too soon, the afterglow faded into grey, the crescent moon swam in the sky, and still, by the glimmer from a lamp, M—— painted on. There was no morrow for that breathless form of strength and grace.

Desirous of completing their task and returning to their homes in the valley, the shikarris became impatient at last. The ladies turned to depart, and the men began to arrange their lights round the carcase. "You must stay and see the wonderful strength of the muscles of the shoulder," and somewhat reluctantly we consented. Firmly but delicately was the skin separated from the throat and along the stomach, parted by the thumb-nail, and then gradually it was peeled from the flesh. No glove was ever more gently withdrawn from a lady's hand. "Look at the ear," said one of the men; "it is split. This tigress has killed a man." Such is the superstition generally entertained by the natives. There was another pause to

hand up the sharp point of a porcupine's quill that was embedded in the flesh, a relic of some past fight for a meal. G—— stepped forward in order to secure the solitary bone which, most curiously, is to be found embedded in the thickest part of the flesh of a tiger's shoulder. This, the natives, struck as they always are by any singularity of a nature that they cannot explain, seek to secure as a charm. Both in size and form the lobed bone greatly resembles one half of a "merrythought" bone. They also covet the creature's whiskers, which they wear about the person, in the belief that they are a safeguard of some sort. Sometimes they are resorted to as a poison, and a very cruel one; when they are sliced fine, and mixed with the food, they destroy life by attaching themselves to the intestines, and causing intense irritation.

The scene was worthy of the brush of a Rembrandt or a Schniders, as the flaming lights in the cressets cast their glare upon the crimson carcase stripped of its beautiful covering. On the following morning all the people belonging to the establishment were to be seen

passing to and fro, bearing away horrible morsels of the creature's now putrid flesh. Every bit of the animal was coveted. The concoction produced from the mess is believed to be an antidote or a cure for many complaints. Above all it is thought to arrest the progress of that universal malady which even the healthy must suffer from—old age. The bones are boiled down for the sake of the fat, which is said to cure rheumatism, and bits of the liver are thrust into the mouth of a male infant in order to impart courage.

The loss of life occasioned by wild animals and snakes is very formidable. A Government report, which includes Mysore and Coorg, states that in an average year 19,432 persons and 61,229 head of cattle were thus destroyed.* That there is little suffering in the death caused by snake-bite is some consolation; and Dr. Livingstone leads us to surmise that this may also be the case when death is occasioned by wild animals. His personal experience upon the subject is very remarkable. In an account

* See *Times of India*, March 16th, 1878.

which he gives of an attack made upon him by a lion he says:

"He caught me by the shoulder as he sprang, and we both came to the ground together. Growling horribly close to my ear, he shook me as a terrier dog does a rat. The shock produced a stupor similar to that which seems to be felt by a mouse after the first shake of the cat. It caused a sense of dreaming, in which there was no feeling of pain or of terror, though I was quite conscious of all that was happening. . . . . This singular condition was not the result of any mental process. The shock annihilated fear, and allowed no sense of horror in looking round at the beast. This peculiar state is probably produced in all animals killed by carnivora, and, if so, it is a merciful provision by our benevolent Creator for lessening the pain of death."*

Before the season closed, it was arranged that we should spend a short time at Warre, in the Higher Konkan, see the adjacent country, and then camp for a few days up in Pertabgurh,

* See Livingstone's last Journals.

the strong fort made famous in story, built by Sivajee and his friend Moro Trimmul. Carts were forwarded with the necessaries and some of the luxuries of life, and we followed gaily down the ghât, travelling in tongas. What a pleasant time it is when the familiar spots on an excursion are left behind, and all is fresh and new! The road leads to the Bancoot estuary, where small steamers sail in connection with those that trade along the coast. The mountain-road is considered to be a triumph of engineering. It gently inclines downward, until an extensive plateau is reached, where gipsies camp, and naked children, wild as the buffaloes they tend, peer at you through bushy masses of tangled black hair. After this, the spurs of rock have been removed by blasting, and to the left there is a two foot wall and a profound descent. As the road kept perpetually winding, the heads of the ponies appeared to be always making for the precipice. This sunset side of the Máhableshwur scarps has long engaged the attention of geologists, some of whom are of opinion that the country

has undergone several distinct epochs of *soulèvement*. The first period is conceived to have been one marked by plutonic energy and violence, and the last long-continued and gentle.

It was a relief when the great grip of all was rounded, but the tumbled ravine was very fine, scarred by the bed of many a torrent. Even at this season slender streams dashed from shelf to shelf of rock, and, fanned by the humid western breeze, the luxuriant vegetation presented every shade of green, mixed with tender browns and purples; whilst at our feet lay the narrow valley, mapped out by road and stream, and blocked by the semi-isolated rock crowned by the fortifications of Pertabgurh. As we descended, the bamboo and the silk cotton-tree (*simul*) re-appeared, and the bawa (*cassia fistula*), with showers of yellow flowers resembling those of the laburnum, and the luellia, with mimosa-like leaves and tassels of fragrant blossoms, of a delicate rose-colour above and white below. This tree, the branches of which take a horizontal direction, growing in patches along the side of the hills, has much

the effect of a cedar. Stalwart young teaks *(teclona grandis)*, the most useful of all the woods of Southern Asia, stood sturdily up, clothed with great rough leaves.* The neem, the Persian lilac, or evergreen bead-tree, as it is sometimes called, was covered with flowers. The tall spikes of the tobacco-plant were also a remarkable feature in the landscape. Most striking of all was the splendid leaf of the wild plantain *(musa paradisiaca)*, which waved in every crevice. Some people have thought this to be "the tree of life." St. Pierre, commenting upon its strange appearance, observes that "the

* In an interesting lecture given by Dr. Brandis, the chief of the forest department in India, he exhibited a sample of teak wood. "That most useful, honest, and valuable tree," he said, "had only accomplished eighteen inches in diameter at the base in a period of ninety-five years. It may be interesting to some persons," he goes on to remark, "to know the comparative production of indigenous trees in India and in Europe. Thus, taking, say, Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and Turkey, with some other few Continental countries, it is pretty accurately calculated that there are in their whole extent some six hundred varieties of arboriculture; while in India, having about the same area as the several countries enumerated, there are four thousand varieties." See *Daily Telegraph* and *Deccan Herald*, October 16, 1880.

violet cone, like an erect and golden crest, at the end of a branch of plantain, with the stigmas peering through like gleaming eyes, might well have suggested to the guilty imagination of Eve the semblance of a serpent tempting her to pluck the forbidden fruit it bore." "The original habitat of the common plantain," says Birdwood, "was probably the Valley of the Euphrates, along the whole of the sub-Himalayan tract, before the Deccan was joined to Asia by the formation of the alluvial plain of Hindostan."* Beautiful birds nested in these sheltered coves, and the green pigeon (*crocopus chlorigaster*) cooed. Were it not for its soft note, it would escape notice, from its colours so closely resembling the leaves of the trees it frequents.†

There is a charming little bungalow at Warre. We sat for great part of the evening looking straight up at grim Pertabgurh. The gongs and the kettledrums sounded from the temple. Before going to rest, however, we strolled towards a great camping-party that

* See Birdwood's "Vegetable Products, &c.," p. 135.

† The poet is true to nature when he tells us that this bird never touches the earth until it dies.

had brought goods from the estuary. The people looked very comfortable, sitting round fires which sent up great flickering flames, and sheltered by their carts and bullocks. Before them were piles of chupates, a kind of crumpet baked on an iron plate, and they were talking at the top of their voices, an exercise which is as the breath of life to a native. Late at night the camp was struck, and fainter and fainter became the jingling of the bells and the voices of the drivers as the cavalcade filed off towards the Deccan.

In the morning very early I procured a guide and set off to Jowlee, the scene of so sad a tragedy. The road was long and rough, but "a merry heart goes all the way." I rested for a time in the quivering shade of a ring of bamboos that girded in a village, wishing the while that the canes had been pierced to make them musical in the breeze, a Malacca custom. Passing on we reached the sequestered valley where narrow fields sloped down to the bed of the Sawitri, a strange situation to choose for a great army, yet it was there that the Beejapur

troops camped for the last time, with their horses, and their camels, and splendidly accoutred elephants.

The only way was up the bed of the river, where the water was dried up into little pools and trickling streams. Every stone was round and smooth, and the black boulders were polished by the dashings of countless monsoons. The mighty scarps of Elphinstone and Sidney Points blocked up the valley, and seemed to be marching on us. One unacquainted with the history of the place would scarcely have noticed the jungly ravine that separates them; yet down this grip had Sivajee crept with his Mawulees to consummate the ruin of Jowlee, and down the narrow way had Afzul Khan led his Mohammedan host. At last the village was reached, a pretty, simple-looking place that appeared as if the fierce passions of man had never approached it. The houses were buried under deep-pitched chupper roofing that was corded down with thick ropes and stout poles of bamboo. The rebound of the water from the precipices it strikes must be terrible. The spot

was shaded by lofty jack-trees (*artocarpus integrifolia*), a tree which is very slow of growth and attains an age of several hundred years. The wood is hard and resembles mahogany. The murdered Raja must have enjoyed the shade of these trees. Monstrous fruit, big as a man's head, studded their smooth grey boles.

The jack-fruit with its strong smell, so like that of decaying meat, is a great temptation to bears, who will climb in an astonishing way in order to reach it. It would not be pleasant to be benighted in these groves. The women, well nourished and respectably clad, came running out, with their little ones striding on their hips, to look at the stranger. Alas, I could not talk to them, even through my stupid Goanese guide, as he did not speak Máhratti. Their ornaments, which they allowed me to examine, consisted principally of gold coins, some of which might have been stored in the treasury of Sivajee; those that bore the figure of St. Francis Xavier baptising were introduced into the Konkan by the Jesuits of Goa. One girl wore a gold heart of beautiful workmanship. I was very desirous

of finding if there were any remains of the old fort in existence. "Raja Rao, Sivajee," I said, drawing my hand across my throat. They nodded. "Durg," I continued, "há, há," and they shook their heads. No trace of the stronghold now exists. It was probably one of those village forts made of earth and mud, and protected by a few jingals (a musket fixed on a swivel, capable of being directed with much precision against a foe).

High above the village rises a precipitous hill, on the top of which there is a rock that curiously resembles the form of the Sphinx. To the Hindoo mind it represents a cow, and is accordingly worshipped. What fierce struggles it has witnessed! What would I not have given to have spoken Máhratti, and have induced some old crone on a doorstep to tell me the stories she had heard in her youth. I was afterwards dwelling upon the theme of my unsatisfied longings to a gentleman who was acquainted with every foot of the country and who spoke the language fluently.

"Ah," he said, "once upon a time I had similar

dreams. I questioned the village officers; I talked to the peasants; I worried every native I encountered, about their ruins and their histories,—but to no purpose. Perhaps a ballad or two about Sivajee and the doings up at Pertabgurh may still be extant in the immediate neighbourhood, but with regard to the more ancient forts they neither know nor care. 'What, they say, do such old tales matter to us?' Scoundrels," continued my friend, waxing warm, and shaking his shaggy mane, "how I hate them all!"

Indifference, however, may not be the cause of their silence. War and pestilence have so often ravaged these valleys that at times they have been quite depopulated, and the old traditions have perished; besides which, treacherous in their own nature, natives are never communicative, and again are now-a-days too hungry to be sentimental.

Another morning I made an excursion to the old village of Parr, so pleasantly described by Lady Falkland.* Outside the village I picked up a toe-ring of iron, once silvered over; it

* See "Chow-chow," by Lady Falkland, vol. i.

weighed nearly an ounce, and, not being a very precious article, I put it in my pocket as a remembrance of the place. The number of toe-rings worn by the women of this country indicates their maiden or married state. There is no road to Parr, and a tonjon—a chair with a footboard fixed upon poles—was considered necessary for a lady. I felt to be quite a person of importance with eight bearers, a guide, and a butler all to myself, and that for a transit of but six miles and back. We wound along the narrow valley of the clear Koina, crossing and re-crossing it several times. Even at this dry season the water was above the men's knees. We usually picked our way along the strand, but occasionally it was necessary to plunge into the low thickets on its banks, where the green boughs arched overhead, or barred the way, and had to be cut down. The opposition offered by the fine silken lines that the spiders had thrown across the path was quite curious. Until these are contended with, no one can form an idea of their elasticity and strength.

Sometimes we emerged upon broad meadows waving with high grass, through which herds of buffaloes, surprised at being invaded, pushed their way towards us, and stopped and stared at us with their clear, colourless eyes, half curious, half displeased. Fine free-growing fig and tamarind-trees were dotted over the open country, a charming addition to the landscape, and all the while Pertabgurh was looking down from its lofty crag. In one green lane there was a thick rose-hedge, and the guide stopped and gathered great handfuls of sweet-smelling double blossoms.

Before Parr is reached, a viaduct of some extent crosses the pellucid river, here unconfined, and swelling out into a broad smooth stream, which a band of wild-looking men, with long matchlocks over their shoulders, were fording. Upon its banks rose noble old timber trees, under which, according to tradition, the tents of the Beejapur General, so courteously received by the wily Sivajee, were pitched, and in the shade of which the doomed envoy slept for the last time.

Parr was once a place of some local importance. The old road to Bombay passed near it, but that has been turned aside, and the town is now abandoned to a few Brahmins (for it is a holy spot) and small traders. Carved wood and rusty iron-work told the tale of other days. The ground-floor of one house, minus its front, and with one side wall, was actually inhabited. The town lies right at the foot of the mountain, green on this its southern side. A steep path leads up to the spot where death awaited the old warrior. How the long street echoed with the steps of flying men that day! His personal suite, chosen friends, with some members of his family, threw themselves on horseback, scarcely drawing bridle until they forded the Koina, and fled across the plain to the strong Mohammedan town of Kárhad, forty miles away.

Sivajee himself had in earlier years narrowly escaped assassination on the Parr ghât at the hands of certain emissaries of the King of Beejapur.

The few strangers that now visit Parr are

led there by the antiquity of its temples. It is probable that at one time there were jewels belonging to their divinities, for they are enclosed within thick walls, partly fortified. Aware that they were celebrated, I had expected to see something in the shape of architectural merit, but the low walls, painted red, were almost concealed by the thick chuppering which the terrible rains to which they are exposed render necessary, and their interiors appeared, seen by the dim lights set round the shrines, to be mean and greasy. On the exterior of the quadrangle, in front of its low door, stood a large sheet of undressed stone, mounted upon three rough-hewn legs, probably an ancient sacrificial altar.

A continuation of the fine road that we had descended from Máhableshwur led down another ghât into the Lower Konkan. One afternoon we walked down part of the pass. The arid scenery was of the finest description. On the opposite side of the valley were a series of scarps and jutting headlands, composed of layers of basalt; the earth and *débris* not ab-

sorbed by each molten wave had in cooling risen to the top, and formed dark horizontal lines, regular as the stripes in a piece of stuff. In places the columnar formation was distinctly seen. The precipices were backed by a confused mass of mountains lying in the direction of Poona. Not a green thing met the eye; all was stern and barren. We pursued our winding way, stopping occasionally to pick the tiny crystals from the bubbles in the rock. Suddenly rounding one of those bluffs, so characteristic of the scenery, we had the Lower Konkan at our feet. Ridge upon ridge of arid, sun-baked hill rolled at last into the dark sea-line and were lost; whilst above us, on a mighty crag, towered Pertabgurh. The fort is seen to great advantage on its western side. In returning we saw a most beautiful pigeon resting upon the low wall. The body and breast were a lively green, but its wings were of rich crimson, with just one streak of pure white along them. Darkness now drew on, which was all the better for us, as in many places the shepherds were firing the jungles. To clear the

woods by fire is the theme of many an ancient Indian poem. "Agni" (fire), sometimes called "the feeder upon trees," "shears the hair of the earth. The birds are terrified, but when the flames have done their work the wood is easy of access." *

On the distant hills the glowing light seemed to writhe about like some monstrous snake seeking what it could devour; on the nearer ones it was climbing up through the dried herbage, and the wind tossed it back in waves of flickering flame. "Húr, húr, Mahadeo, the fire is on the hills," was the war-cry o the Máhrattas.

* See Manning's "Ancient and Mediæval India," vol. i, p. 56.

CHAPTER VII.

The Tonjon—Difficulties of the Ascent—The Fortifications—Description of the Fort—Dancing Girls—Historical Scenes—Strange way of Calculating Distance—Various Relics in the Temple and Fort—Fortress of Máhar—Hot Springs—Amusing Ways of the Community—Boyish Friendships—The Konkani Brahmins—A Proud Brahmin—Vedic Hymn to Ushas.

THE morning was grey when the sound of many voices put slumber to flight. Between twenty and thirty persons, men, women, and boys, were disputing over the packages that were to be conveyed up to Pertabgurh; while the men with the tonjons were also chattering. My bearers, who were badly matched as to height—which was unpleasant—led the way; trotting along they set up a chorus, each verse of which ended with "Ráma, Ráma," at-

tempting the while to keep step, but for this they were reprimanded by the guide, as it is most unpleasant to the traveller, and with some people induces sickness. Crossing the meadows we passed a pretty ruined temple, in which, for my head was full to overflowing with thoughts of Sivajee, that warrior had perhaps worshipped. But no; it had been built, and, as it appeared, very badly built, by a tailor some fifty years ago. A tonjon is a miserably uncomfortable conveyance for mountain work. The bearers would make a rush up some steep bit, and it was all one could do not to slip out backwards: then they would come to a dip, and the position was reversed. After surmounting any unusual difficulty the whole band would shout a wild thanksgiving to Ráma. Then there would be a gentler ascent, a few minutes of tranquillity in which to inhale the sweet odour of the jessamines, and admire the climbing ferns. The latter, however, are not plentiful. Worst of all, as we ascended higher, narrow spurs of rock, slippery with wire-grass, had to be traversed, affording momentary peeps

into deep blue ravines; but, as the tonjon rocked about like a top-heavy boat in a gale, on such occasions I shut my eyes, and consoled myself by reflecting that the people that bore me were probably descendants of Sivajee's famous "thousand."

As we drew nearer the black walls of the fortress loomed out larger and larger. We wound round a stupendous pile of semi-detached rock, surmounted by battlements for guns, and turned along a narrow path, with a precipice on one side, and a perpendicular wall of rock upon the other—a stern barrier in which no break was visible. I began to despair, when suddenly we slipped into a concealed and narrow way, with steep, rough steps cut out of the rock. There was scarcely blue sky enough overhead to light us on our way, which terminated in a low, arched passage, with dark guard-chambers. The half-open door which led to it was plated with thick sheets of iron (rusty enough now), and bristled over with long spikes, set there to prevent the elephants from battering it in with their foreheads.

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After passing another such door the lower fortifications were gained. Far above frowned the battlements of the inner fort. Turbaned heads appeared above them, and a man, perched on a giddy pinnacle—the warder, who holds office by hereditary descent—blew us a sonorous welcome from an immense circular brass horn, the old way of welcoming strangers to the fortress. We had still a toilsome ascent before us, over steep steps of stone broken up and in confusion. We caught sight of many buildings, glanced down into a deeply-cut reservoir, and came to another set of steps, in a kind of stone tunnel separated into compartments. Here, in perilous times, dried wood and combustibles were stored, to be lighted, should an enemy gain the lower fort, and their further progress arrested by a glowing mass of fire. The most prominent object to greet the eye on entering the upper enceinte, was a magnificent tree of the fig tribe, said to have been planted by the hand of Sivajee, in the shade of which our tents were pitched.

Seated at the door of his tent, his duty done,

for breakfast was ready, was the cook, Portuguese of course, arrayed in spotless white, with a crimson fez upon his head. His long string of sonorous names began with "Alonzo," and ended with "Braganza." The other servants were going peacefully about, the well-beloved chairs conveniently placed, and even the stern old fort had a homelike look. After taking our coffee in haste, guns, painting paraphernalia, and books were neatly collected, and, intent upon their separate amusements, the party dispersed. Luncheon was to be brought down to the entrance gate, famous in story, for above it had been stuck the bleeding head of the too confiding Afzul Khan. The easel was set up in the rock-cut steps, a grim-looking place. High walls, built of great blocks of basalt, rose on each side, and a rusty old jingal still poked its nose out of a loophole, as if desirous, even in decay, of doing its duty. A few steps further, and a peep was caught of the yellow grass that marked out the outline of battlement and tower, producing a beautiful effect.

Morning after morning found us at the gate

of terrible memories. Sometimes the silence was broken by the report of a rifle in the valley, sometimes by the merry chatter of the dancing girls, young and handsome, ascending from the village with flowers for the adornment of Bhowanee the Cruel, who sat in the temple. Bright of hue were their robes, and many a big pearl was set in the gold and silver ornaments they wore. They smiled in passing, and threw into our laps handfuls of the golden champa flowers, jessamines, and the crimson heads of the double hibiscus. Occasionally we were put to flight by the transit of a cow seeking her pastures, or a man would come scrambling up, with his tattoo following behind him like a dog. But the women insisted on creeping between the legs of the big easel. They did so very gently, steadying it with their hands, and then they went on their way laughing at the skilful feat they had performed.

From time to time I took a stroll close to the spur of rock with the battery upon it, round the base of which we had wound. It looked immediately down upon a pastoral scene, a long

narrow meadow where cattle were quietly chewing the cud in the shade of the trees. Yet upon this tranquil spot was decided the fate of the Beejapur army, and I may almost say that of the Mohammedan power in the Deccan. A small iron erection marks the spot where Sivajee's tiger-claws struck at the heart of Afzul Khan. I looked down upon it from the place where the fierce mother of Sivajee (no longer the playful little Jeejee, but the dreamer of dreams and the seer of visions), had stood to witness the interview which, if successful, was to secure to her son a throne. The horn blew, the deed of blood was done, and the guns from this battery thundered forth the signal for the onslaught upon the gallant army at Jowlee.

When the shadows fell, so that painting had to be abandoned, we sat and talked of the days long past, of the revelling in the fort, and of the gatherings outside, where the Kuthas, a kind of mythological plays which Sivajee dearly loved to witness, took place, in a grassy punchbowl which is still pointed out by the peasant. It was a less romantic way of beguiling time to

watch our men as they scrambled down the rocks with the luncheon basket, at an hour which would bring the sportsmen up from the valley, followed by their beaters, a wild crew recruited from the recesses of the jungle, who would throw down the bakery, the hog-deer, the jungle-cock, and the pigeons. These folks have a fashion of their own in reckoning distance saying it is a "cuckoo's call" from such a place.

In journeying up and down we had to pass the gates of the enclosure where the temple stood. On their interior side these walls were chequered with little square recesses for the reception of small lamps, and at each angle was a huge iron cresset to be filled when occasion demanded with cotton seed steeped in oil, making, when lighted, a right royal blaze. The magnificent deepdans were also crocketed for the purpose of illumination. At the time of the Déwali, or Feast of Lamps, the place must have presented the appearance of a fairy scene. The temple was erected by Sivajee during the rains of the year 1661, he being unable at that time, on account, he alleged, of the disturbed

state of the country, to make his annual pilgrimage to the shrine of his family divinity at Tooljapur. The building was dedicated to Bhowanee, with great solemnity and splendour, the year after the assassination of the Khan. That was a popular act, but Sivajee's treachery with regard to the Raja of Jowlee, had brought him into disgrace, and he sought to propitiate the people by the magnificence of these festivals. It was a long, low building, with an open hall supported by pillars, and the great teak-wood doors clamped with iron were handsomely carved. How often had they been swept by the robes of the Raja, how often had his naked feet traversed the chequered pavement of black and white marble! A carved and painted screen stood before the shrine of the goddess in whom he trusted. The spot, indeed, overflowed with interesting associations.

Like most of the buildings in the fort, the temple was thickly thatched with long dry grass and leaves. In the olden time it was usual for the villagers in the vicinity of hill

forts to contribute a certain quantity of such material, a practice which prevailed long before the days of Sivajee, but he was the first person to turn it to account in strategy. On one occasion, he having previously corrupted some members of a garrison, a party of his faithful Mawulees, loaded with bundles of grass, having their arms concealed beneath them, appeared at the gate, in the dress of villagers, to deposit as they pretended the annual supply. Admittance being thus gained, they surprised the garrison and possessed themselves of the fortress. The priests of the place have in their charge some of Sivajee's personal ornaments, but they are not now shown. We were told, however, by a gentleman in authority who had looked over them that they were more curious than beautiful or valuable. The priests also guard the treasures that belong to the goddess, who is handsomely endowed with precious stones, pearls, and gold. Formerly the wives and widows of the Rajas of Sáttara were in the habit of making an annual pilgrimage to the shrine at Pertabgurh. They used to spread

their tents on the side of the mountain, and a pretty sight the gay pavilions, the butterfly children in spangles and gold, the musicians, the numerous attendants, and above all the fine elephants in gorgeous trappings, must have presented. Even now the shrine is not deserted. The Rajas of Sáttara are no more, but on certain occasions the jungle folk and the villagers come trooping up in holiday attire, set off by many an ancient coin and ornament, precious heir-looms carefully stored.

The most interesting relic now existing in the fort is a hall, with two or three small rooms attached to it, which formed part of Sivajee's palace.

Twenty years ago the building was entire, but about that time all but this part was pulled down for the sake of the value of the fine carved teak-wood beams, which Government sold. The ceiling of the hall, though black with age, still retains traces of the colours in which it has been picked out, and the noble beams that cross it will outlast the stout walls of the building, unless they also are sold. The small mullioned windows

were open to the air and the birds. Once, no doubt they had been filled in with thin sheets of mother of pearl (through which the light falls so softly) that were made in Goa, from a large oyster-shell, and at that period used all over the Western Deccan instead of glass. A small balcony hung in air commanded a glorious view. On either side, deep down below, were the tumbled hills and dark green valleys with their silver streams. Immediately in front the view was blocked by the pinnacle surmounted by the battery, where the head of Afzul Khan was buried after it was taken down from the gateway. Doubtless many a glance of fierce joy have Sivajee and his mother cast upon that ghastly spectacle. Directly east were seen the lone green plateaux and the mighty precipices of the Marri Máhal (the native name for the Máhableshwur country). Though some ten miles away, they looked to be oppressively near. The pure white chunan clung to the stone of the balcony, in spite of the beatings of more than two hundred monsoons.

Many a time has it been pressed by the feet of

Jeejee Bye and her son. The hall is now used as a receptacle for the musical instruments belonging to the temple: enormous kettle-drums, battered trumpets, bells that had perhaps sounded at the opening of the temple, and there was an old wornout horn that may many a time have welcomed the Raja on his return to the stronghold.

The upper fortifications were entire. We could walk round the narrow ramparts and command a very extensive view over the whole surrounding country, and by the aid of our field-glasses and the ordnance map we made out many a spot of renown.

The half hour before the sun set was the time to look north-west. The dark walls set by the side of the shining Sawitri were those of the fortress of Máhar, the theatre of many romantic events. There Sivajee lived in his wild youth, and thither fled the Peishwa after the battle of Kirkee. The hill that rises above it is difficult of ascent. In its side are temples and habitations hewn out of the solid rock, whose origin is lost in antiquity. The principal temple is sixty feet

long, thirty broad, and ten in height, and the light is admitted through a range of pillars forming a grand entrance. These remains are thought to have been in connection with Bhuddist caves at Kher, some twelves miles off, in which there are still crumbling dagobas.

Not far from Máhar there are several hot springs, which during the last century were visited by European convalescents, but now-a-days the Anglo-Indian is too busy to bathe, and they are deserted. Beyond lay the Bancoot estuary and the sea. Visible but for a short time, and that only under favourable atmospheric conditions, was a second estuary, specked with rocks, the blackest and the biggest of them being the far-famed Jinjeera. The fine guns that belonged to the Kings of Beejapur, and served to protect the Abyssinian admirals of their fleet, are still there, and one of them is of remarkably large calibre. The English in Bombay were generally on good terms with these officers, from whom they obtained the beef dear to their hearts, which it was otherwise difficult to procure.

In the clear grey of early morning we looked due west. The ramparts commanding this aspect were reared upon the edge of a dizzy scarp. The eye was free to travel over the rolling mists which, at that hour and season, cover the Lower Konkan and hide the sea. A little patience and the scene was transfigured. In one moment the sun flashed out, and its rays drew up the golden vapours out of which imagination created a thousand fantastic forms, that glittered upon the sea. The area embraced by even the upper fortifications was very large. In weak places there were double lines of wall. In these hill forts no attempt is made to alter the natural distribution of the ground. If there was a spur, there walls ran out to guard it, if there was a ravine they formed a loop, being built up or down hill with equal patience. In some nooks the scarlet flowers of the pomegranate, or the perfume of the orange-blossom, told where gardens had been. The foundations of buildings were to be traced in every direction. Here was a stone on which feet were engraved, there an altar with a basil

bush *(ocymum basilicum)* sunk into it. And the old guns that Sivajee had surreptitiously purchased from the Portuguese, overthrown and spiked by the English, thrust their rusty nozzles out of the ground.

Towards one remote spot we were attracted by the periodical ringing of a bell, and we took a quiet opportunity of finding out what it might mean. The bell was suspended in a rude stone chamber, connected by a cell with a centre platform, from the middle of which rose a large brass cobra half curled up, well worked, and evidently old. Around it were four smaller snakes of the same sort, with jars set with flowers between them. This worship must have been a relic of the ancient and almost universal adoration once paid to the serpent. In another part of the fort stood a Linga, an emblem through which vast numbers of Hindoos, or dissenting Hindoos, worship. It may seem strange to find objects such as these in this little centre of Brahminism. But enlightened Brahmins, though they themselves believe in the unity of God, and worship the unseen Spirit, thinking

this to be above the comprehension of the uneducated, and therefore tolerate the many gods through which the vulgar worship. I believe that it is only the very ignorant who adore the object itself. Such ignorance, however, was likely enough to be found among the poor people who lived with their cattle in the thatched cabins of the lower fort.

It was most amusing to watch the ways of this isolated community. There were two youths who had formed one of those close friendships for which Hindoo boys have an aptitude. Curiously enough such friendships are formed without regard to caste. The dwellings of these friends were separated by a deep ravine. Early every morning would one of them, our neighbour, come out and post himself monkey-fashion on a projecting stone, from whence a slip would have been fatal, and shout out "Rám," upon which his chum would make his appearance upon an opposite battlement, and call in a loud voice "Pándu." A long conversation, caught up by the echoes, would then ensue.

We were in the midst of the Brahmini popu-

lation formed by the hereditary priests of the Sivajee house, and their families, who, since the lapse of the Sáttara state, have been permitted to remain, and to receive certain emoluments, by the British government.

Near our tents stood a good-sized house, in which tradition says that Jeejee Bye resided, but which is now occupied by the chief priest of the temple, who civilly invited us to enter the middle court of his abode, and sit with him on the stone benches shaded by plantain-trees. From this court opened large rooms lighted only through the doorways, and by small grated apertures under the roof. A young woman with a child in her arms regarded us from the dim obscurity, but did not advance towards us. His sister-in-law, he informed us. A blind brother was then called forth. "It would give him pleasure to hear us speak." A patient-looking man, clad in fine flannel of the purest white.

Our entertainer was an artist. He brought forth a large square of paper covered over with the pictures of a multitude of divinities and mythological animals, among which the draw-

ing of the horses did him credit. Brahmins are often hard in manner, and insolent when they dare to be so. But this man was soft of voice and gentle. But then he was a Konkani Brahmin,* and they are a very distinguished race among the Brahminical tribes of India. Some of the learned attribute their superiority and the fairness of their complexions to their geographical distribution; others say that this race reached Western India by sea, and therefore are of purer blood than those that travelled

* The original signification of Brahma was hymn (not to be connected with our rendering of it—*prayer*), but in time it came to be applied to the man who uttered the hymns, who was ordinarily employed as a minister of public worship, and at length it came to signify one particular kind of priest (possibly such a one as the present Russian pope), a man distinguished for the gift of song. The Brahmin came in time to occupy a more dignified position. "The gods do not eat the sacrifice offered by a king who has no house priest. Hence the king, even when not intending to bring a sacrifice, should appoint a Brahmin to the office of a house priest." This priest was called a puhorita. And when we find that the king was obliged, at least upon the occasion of one ceremony, to wash the feet of the puhorita, we are no longer surprised to find him possessed of almost supreme power. (See Manning's "Ancient and Mediæval India," chap. v, p. 1.)

by land. The sister brought up chumpa flowers in neat little baskets made of two strong leaves pinned together.

There was a proud Brahmin who took no notice of us; he had a tall wife who stalked about in a red and yellow sari. This lady would have been a shrew among shrews. One day she fell into a most tremendous passion. Perhaps she had reason to be angry, for a cow belonging to another Brahmini lady had walked into her garden and eaten up all the cabbages. For one hour did we hear that high-pitched voice storming, never stopping except when the breath was caught up with a sob. All the little world assembled to see what was the matter, and folks were much amused, as they generally are at the small misfortunes of their neighbours, when they are impatiently borne. Sometimes bhâts or humble bards would wander up from the valley, and sing or recite a little before the houses, probably the tales of other days, or a gosaeen would arrive, "a motley fool," half priest, half minstrel, to amuse the community.

On one occasion, so strange a little mortal presented himself that he was made to promise that he would come up to Máhableshwur and stand as a model, but at first he would not hear of making such a journey. "The jungles on the way are thick," he said, "and the tigers might devour him." He would have made a sorry meal. In the cool of the evening the dancing girls would pass with easy grace, balancing upon their heads great brass lotas full of fresh water from the spring. The blind man would come forth, carrying in his arms, oh! so tenderly, the little child, and groups would assemble on the battlements and look down over the country. Hindoos are fond of fine scenery, but the unsympathetic Mohammedan is said to be blind to its attractions. The people appeared to be sociable, and to visit one another freely, so that it seemed to be a happy little community. When all was quiet, I loved to sit at the door of my tent. There was no moon, but the stars cast a shadow, and the southern cross, erect in the heavens, shone with exceeding brilliancy; but the time to see this striking constellation

to advantage is in the grey-green of daybreak, when its four points are all aglow, and when other stars have paled.

The last few hours of my stay in Pertabgurh were drawing on. I was sitting marvelling at its beauty (and like the poet compassionating "the widowed North," which is not permitted to behold the miracle) when the sound of voices softly chanting broke the profound silence. The sound proceeded from the Brahmin's house. Could they be singing that most affecting Vedic hymn to "Ushas," the dawn? It was possible, at least I loved to think it as I murmured the words I knew so well.

"The fair and bright Ushas, with her bright child, the sun, has arrived.

"Ushas has opened for us the doors of the sky; she has awakened all creatures,

"Arousing one to seek royal power, another to follow after fame, another for grand efforts, another to pursue, as it were, his particular object.

"Ushas awakens all creatures to consider their different modes of life.

"Auspicious Ushas, shine here to-day. Ushas follows the track of the dawns that are past, and is

the first of the unnumbered dawns that are to come, breaking forth, arousing life, and awakening everyone that was dead.

"How great is the interval that lies between the dawns that have arisen and those which are yet to arrive! Ushas yearns longingly after the former dawns, and gladly goes on shining with those that are to come.

"Those mortals are gone who saw the earlier Ushas dawning; we shall gaze upon her now, and the men are coming who are to behold her on future morns.

"Perpetually in former days did the divine Ushas dawn, and now to-day the magnificent goddess beams upon this world; undecaying, immortal, she marches on by her own will."

Casting a farewell glance around, my eye rested on the Brahmin's house. Since the previous evening the walls had been marked in many places with the mysterious sign of the Swastica.

CHAPTER VIII.

Sketch of the Gosaeen—Tempest of Thunder and Lightning—Luxuriant Vegetation—Change of Weather—Return Journey to Belgaum—Visit to the Town of Kárhad—The Mosque—Kárhad Gamins—Jewish Memorial Stones—Domes and Minarets—Jews in India—Houses in a Suburban Neighbourhood—Misled—Appearance of a Shietân.

SOON after our return to the hills, the little gosaeen, whom the tigers had spared, presented himself. He was accompanied by his three babas, miserably thin creatures. The party took up their quarters at the back of the stables, and remained a week. The man, the very queerest of objects, was brought into the verandah to be sketched. His head was covered with a pointed red cap, ornamented with cowrie-shells, strings of which were sus-

pended from his neck, and he wore a very full old red muslin petticoat that reached to the ankle. Under one arm he had a little chair, in which was placed a figure of Bhowanee, touched up with vermillion, and under the other, what he called his harp, the very germ of a stringed instrument. On such a one Adam may have harped to Eve. It was a mere cylinder of iron wood, with a piece of leather tied round the bottom, to which was attached a long stick with a peg thrust through it, a rudimentary fiddle-head. To this was fastened a single string, which was fixed into the cylinder by another peg. This string he twanged with a small bone, shaped like a crochet-needle.

The musician styled himself "harper to Bhowanee." Placing the image on the ground, he proceeded to play and dance before it. He glided round and round with a neat step, keeping his face towards the audience, and then he began to chaunt verses in honour of the goddess. As he went round, his red drapery floated out in a way by no means ungraceful. Sounds from that very instrument may have

greeted the ears of Sivajee, for the hard black wood was split and worn and polished with age.

In the month of May the weather became delightful, so cool, so clear, that it almost seemed as if there were a touch of frost in the air. On finding my way one morning very early to a favourite spot, I scarcely recognised the view from it. The mists were condensed in the valley. It was filled as by a frozen sea, with unfamiliar rocks and islands rising out of it. It was a solemn, lifeless scene. Such might have been the aspect of the world in ages past, ere it was prepared for man. Towards the end of the month high banks of cloud appeared to the west, mountains crowned with castles and fringed by forests with lakes at their feet. The illusion was perfect. These unknown lands vanished in a mighty storm. From every quarter masses of black cloud came hurriedly up, veined by fierce lightning. It was Indra* himself who came shouting in his car, hurling

* Indra is worshipped as the giver of storms, and the annual rains so essential to agricultural success.

his thunderbolt at the demon Vritra, followed by the maruts, the wild spirits of the tempest. The strife continued for hours, and for hours we watched the battle. Suddenly there was a pause, more impressive for the moment than the roar of the elements. Down from the very zenith poured a dazzling stream of electric fluid, followed by a crash that was felt like a blow. Half an hour later the sky was a serene green, and the birds were singing.

This tempest was succeeded by days of rain quite uncalculated upon, and fears were entertained that the monsoon was upon us. The gay world dissolved "like snow wreath in thaw;" carriages and carts hurried about in every direction, straw and bits of paper littered the gardens lately so neat, and we were left to wet and solitude. This deluge proved to be the result of a cyclone off Madras, which had been very disastrous to the shipping, and the weather, with the rainy season so near, was unable to clear itself. It afforded us the opportunity, however, of seeing the jungles under a new aspect. The thick, leafy bed under the

trees sank down, soon to be turned into rich soil for their sustenance. The tender crimson shoot of the curcuma came up in perfection, and from it the great flag-like leaves and plumy flower were developed with wonderful rapidity. A charming little arum, with a flower no bigger than one's thumb, peeped up, white as the driven snow, with a purple eye. "The cobra-lily," so called because its pointed lip turns inwards and gives it a fanciful resemblance to the hood of the reptile whose name it has borrowed. Another lily had great, star-like blossoms that trembled on tall stems. The orchids, "the children of the mist," to use a native expression, threw out succulent green roots that embraced the trees, and in due time lovely sprays of lilac and white flowers made their appearance. The boles and rough, contorted branches of the jambool became like velvet with the fresh green moss that clung to them. The lichens that spotted the stones were charming. One variety was deep orange, another of the liveliest light, metallic green. We found five or six sorts of ground-ferns not

previously visible, and two strange varieties, peeped out from the sides of the mossy trees; the long, slender leaves of one of them were embossed on the surface by the seeds that bordered the main-rib on the under side. The silver-fern that, in the dry months, had given a mouldy appearance to the red soil, unfurled; its beautiful tufts would have delighted a painter of still life. The bracken shot up bright of hue, but as stiff as iron in its undeveloped stage.

But the greatest curiosity of the jungle was a lively young snail, with its house upon its back; the first I had seen in India. The shell was thicker and darker, and not so gracefully curved as that of our English acquaintance. Numbers of skittish land-crabs, of orange and brown, made their appearance. The natives catch them eagerly; they serve as a relish for their curry. They are also much appreciated by the birds.

It was only during an occasional interval, when the cloud-rack was in too great a hurry to shed its drops, that we could get an idea of

what nature was doing in the jungle. Ten minutes' suspension of the downfall found the whole family abroad—alas, to meet again all too soon in a dripping condition. Sometimes, but rarely, we got a drive to one of the points, and then the scenery was superb; mountains stood out that we had never seen before, and the marvellous assemblage of ridges, and peaks, and headlands were as purple as the bloom upon the bilberry. Even indoors we lived in an atmosphere highly charged with water. It was impossible to shut it out, so the windows and doors remained open much as usual, and with the free admission of the air there was less risk of our getting mouldy. One night I stepped into the verandah to see if I could obtain a glimpse of the moon, but there was nothing but the thick mist that caught the glow of the house lamps; suddenly I saw a huge figure, a figure as tall as a tree, standing right before me. For a moment I was startled, but I quickly perceived that it was my own shadow magnified. I raised my arms, the phantom did the same; I

put them akimbo, so did the phantom. We went through a series of gymnastics with curious effect, and then with a polite courtesy we parted company.

Nothing was to be seen now but the ghostly trees by the road side as, with thankful hearts, we rolled away from Máhableshwur. The fury of the monsoon was to be accomplished before the eyes of the gay world would again open upon it. With huts well chuppered in, and provisioned with grain and tobacco, the few natives employed to look after the houses would sleep the months away. It is their season of leisure and enjoyment.

Slowly we journeyed over the heavy roads, cut up by the baggage-waggons. At this rate should we ever finish our long journey? The question was soon solved. With the seven miles of plateau we also left behind the dense rain-clouds. The sun, a stranger for many a day, shone forth. Shawls and cloaks were made into wet bundles, and stowed away. Delightful was the stroll by the side of the Lady Krishna whilst breakfast was in the course

of preparation, and in the afternoon we had a joyous picnic dinner under a tamarind-tree.

During my return journey to Belgaum I had an opportunity of visiting the town of Kárhad, which I had never entered although I had roved over its vast cemetery. In the time of the Beejapur kings it was a place of importance, and thither it may be remembered fled the fugitives from Parr.

If I had been able to choose my time I should not have fixed upon twelve o'clock in the month of June for the expedition. Three quarters of a mile of dusty sand lay before me, and when I got mid-way I stopped, almost inclined to turn back. The heat and glare were distressing, and the wind—there is always a wind at Kárhad—felt like invisible flames. There is I believe but one day in the year when the sun in this latitude is vertical, and I do believe that this was the very day. However, with the tall minarets before me, I gathered courage and went on. Passing through a doorway in the crumbling walls I saw streets with large houses chiefly built of wood, and

much out of the perpendicular. Iron-bound doors opened into vast courts, with ornamental tanks, and fountains no longer supplied with water; and there were carved galleries supported by pillars, the tracery of which had been picked out in colours. It must once have been a very handsome city.

The population was now evidently principally Hindoo, for there was an amazing display of gods and goddesses, who peeped round corners and looked down from every shuttered balcony. I made for the mosque, passed under a lofty arched doorway, and was thankful to sit down in the shade of a fine group of trees, whilst I inspected the façade. It was a handsome building. The tall minarets rising from the ground (they were more like towers than minarets) were built of alternate courses of brick and stone; they are believed to be between six and seven hundred years old, and if so belong to the early Mohammedan period. They reminded me much of the minarets of Tunis, which are very grand. The mosque had a fine hemispherical dome, a form of

dome that above all others satisfied the eye.

I was loth to leave the quiet precincts for the hot streets. The elderly people civilly made way for me, but I was followed by troops of children; they were bold and impudent, and I bore away with me the impression that these gamins were in advance, as to mischief, of the rest of their race. An irascible old gentleman, slipper in hand, was chasing a couple of them round and round the altar in his garden, but they pulled faces and evaded him. I wandered on, thinking of that terrible association, "The Brahmini poisoners of Kárhad," a sort of Thuggism. How often they had trod these stones; but I was recalled from my reverie by finding myself face to face with a bold-looking damsel who was laughing and staring. I stared too, for she was a strange figure huddled up in a most voluminous cloud of white muslin marked all over with great red discs; on her head was a crown of yellow flowers, and she wore a number of heavy silver ornaments that looked as if they were very old. Behind her were a giggling crew of the same stamp—Nautch girls,

no doubt; so I hastened away in the direction of some domes and minarets that I saw in the distance. I found they belonged to two beautiful twin tombs of white marble set side by side in a cypress grove. In the sort of suburban neighbourhood I had reached, the houses were small, and at once struck me as being peculiar. Instead of courts and verandahs they had little gardens in front of them, in which stood some sloping stones which I recognised as Jewish tombs or memorial stones. Then I remembered that at one period there was a large Jewish population in Kárhad, offshots no doubt of the shipwrecked Jews of the Lower Kónkan. Other spires and domes were visible in another part of the town, and I was hesitating as to whether time would allow of my visiting them, when a whole family issued from one of the cottages, and pointed earnestly in another direction. It was evident that they wished to render me some service. Perhaps some object of interest lay that way. So I pursued the path indicated by them, accompanied for some distance by a handsome young woman, doubtless a Jewess.

In Poona, the synagogue being close to our compound I often walked up to the women's gallery and looked down upon the ceremonies, chiefly marriages, etc. The costume of the women is precisely that of the native women, nor could I trace the slightest difference in their features. The men had a semi-European appearance, and were distinguished in dress only during certain parts of the services when a white muslin scarf or shawl was thrown over the cap or turban, and enveloped the shoulders. Occasionally, however, there would be a tall old man with a flowing beard and robes that descended to the feet, every inch a Jew. We made acquaintance with the mistress of the school attached to this place of worship. She was a very tall, stately, fair-complexioned woman, but she was a native of Bagdad.

Alas, these good people had but been putting me in the way to the travellers' bungalow, from which they thought that I had strayed. Quite misled I had now nearly a mile of cemetery to cross. Tomb upon tomb dotted the plain; pointed arches and domes, as far as the eye

could reach. Some of these structures were very elegant. There were also the stony graves of the poor. In some cases their bones appeared to have been dragged out of the earth by wild animals. The only inscriptions to be found were those in Hebrew characters. Interspersed, rose great bushes of the African fig covered with flame-coloured blossoms. One had to be aware of them, for their fine spines are cruelly irritating.

Almost exhausted I felt the necessity of rest, but no building afforded more than an inch or two of shade, so after ascertaining that it was vacant I crept into the twilight of a broken tomb. Whilst I was refreshing myself, there arose in the distance what the natives call a "Shitan," or "devil." Two gigantic pillars of dust came whirling up against the clear horizon, and as suddenly disappeared. A slight attack of fever and many reproaches were the result of my escapade. But I had seen Kárhad, and I bowed my head to the inevitable with becoming meekness.

CHAPTER IX.

Discovery by an Adventurous Sergeant—Birth of a Young Elephant—African and Asiatic Elephants—Botanical Notes—A Remarkable Fern—The Hargul, or Mustard Tree of Scripture—Superstitions connected with Trees—The Vibhtaka—Natural History Notes—Thugs of the Vegetable World—Introduction of the African Coffee Shrub—The Fraternity of Poisoners—A Pretty Sight—Miss Jennie.

WE gained the summit of the last ghât, where rising in the midst of the green plain we perceived the familiar battlements of "the old fort." The variety of tints displayed by the rich vegetation was a treat that our eyes had not enjoyed for long. The noble tamarind carpeted the ground with its blossoms, the mango stretched out its knarled arms to greet us, the feathery bamboo waved its welcome to us, "The flames of the forest," as the Hindoos

happily call the Golden Mhure (an acacia native to Mexico), were all ablaze. During our absence an interesting event had occurred in the fort. An enterprising sergeant had, regardless of snakes, crept into a small opening in the exterior wall, and had, after much wriggling, emerged in the enceinte. This bold adventure led to the discovery of a labyrinth of underground passages constructed of large blocks of tooled stone neatly put together, and roofed by flat stones rising in places like the underside of a staircase. In one spot there were the remains of a door. The teak wood had crumbled away, leaving the massive iron plates and hinges much corroded. There were altogether twenty-five passages, the nucleus being under the larger group of Jain temples. The conclusion arrived at was that the existence of these galleries was anterior to that of the present fort, but that they were not older than the Jain temples. The natives flocked in crowds to the place, and took great interest in the explorations. It is possible that they knew more upon the subject than the Europeans.

The tradition that there were secret ways leading from the mosque to the open country is the cause of its having been so rigorously closed of late years. By way of precaution, the newly discovered passages were filled in. Still more excitement was occasioned by a circumstance that had occurred in the commissariat stables.

An elephant, a valuable animal, was taken ill. It shrieked and it groaned, and its cries were heard throughout the camp. The disorder was attributed to liver-complaint, and the creature was treated accordingly. The remedies, however, afforded no relief, and the moans continued, and only ceased upon the sufferer giving birth to a fine young calf.

Elephants are not so unwilling to breed in captivity as has been imagined, but such events are not encouraged. The birth of a young elephant does not answer, in an economical point of view, as it cannot be made useful before reaching the age of sixteen years, and the keep of such an infant costs a very considerable sum. On this occasion there was wrath on the part of the authorities, but it was agreed that

the little creature should be kept, as it had made its appearance. When born its height was three feet two inches, and its little trunk, which was only ten inches long, was nearly stiff. It was far from steady on its legs, and for the first few days it would roll upon its back, and, being unable to right itself, would hopelessly beat the air with its stumpy legs. After a short time, however, it began to play under its mother. From the first it sucked most vigorously. Before long its great amusement was to try and climb the palisades of its stable. The construction of the knee-joint renders these animals very clever in surmounting obstacles, but they cannot jump, as they are not able to lift their four legs from the ground at once. Their greatest aptitude appears to be for swimming, which they are said to do better than any other land animal. "On one occasion," says Mr. Sanderson, speaking of some elephants he had in his charge, that had the Ganges and several of its large tributaries to cross, "they were six hours without touching the bottom. After a rest on a sandbank, they

completed the swim in three more; not one was lost. I have heard of more remarkable swims than this."*

The same authority goes on to remark upon the misconception that exists respecting the height of the elephant. "There is little doubt that there is not an elephant ten feet at the shoulder in India." . . . "Twice round an elephant's foot is his height, within one or two inches; more frequently it is exactly so. Persons unacquainted with elephants not unfrequently guess from ten to fifteen times round the foot is the height. As the diameter of a large male elephant's foot is eighteen inches, ten circumferences would make his height forty-seven feet. The height of African elephants is greater than that of Asiatic elephants, both in males and females." Sir Samual Baker in his "Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia," says, "Both sexes

* See "Nineteen Years among the Wild Beasts of India," by G. P. Sanderson, officer in charge of the Government Elephant-catching Establishment in Mysore, pp. 52 and 56. Publishers, Allen & Co., Waterloo Place, London.

average about one foot taller than the Asiatic elephant."*

The mother regarded her infant with marked fondness, for among all created creatures the elephant stands unrivalled in gentleness, and this one took the greatest care not to hurt her offspring. All the world of Belgaum flocked to see the little stranger, "the empress" as it was called. It was the delight of the native population. In due time the creature cut some teeth, and in six months it began to eat a little grass, and was sent out with its mother to browse in the jungle. There the latter became very ill, and died of lock-jaw. The only wound

* Dr. Fryer in his travels sees an elephant for the first time, and is as much surprised at the creature's ungainly appearance, as the Greeks may have been at the Battle of Arbela. "His body," he says, "is a symmetrical deformity (if I may so say); the haunches and quarters are clapped together like so many heaps; his neck is short, slapping ears like scates, little eyed, and a broad face from which he drops his proboscis or trunk, thrusting it out or shrivelling it in as he chooses." The good doctor goes on to inform us that his huge tusks of ivory are for defence, not mastication, and that his tail is curt. See Dr. Fryer's Journal, p. 189.

upon her was a boil apparently of little importance, but the frame of this huge animal is strangely sensitive, and it is supposed to have occasioned her death. A female elephant was dispatched from the commissariat lines, to bring the royal infant back to her home.*

During our absence a betel-house had been erected in a shady plot of ground added to the garden. Such an erection was originally used for the rearing of the valuable betel-nut palm, but it is now to be found in all good Indian gardens. Its purpose is to secure to such plants as require it the moisture and shade natural to them, and to protect the early shoots of of others that when more mature can be placed out. The building was constructed of bamboo lattice-work, and covered above with coir matting that could be rolled up at certain seasons.

A low, long platform built of laterite, Nature's own brick, ran down the centre, and upon it were set the most delicate plants. Such as required it were covered with glass bells, others

* The father of this baby has lately been condemned to death. He hated camels, and contrived to kill two of these beasts, valuable animals.

grew in vases of a beautiful description of pottery made at Hála,* in Scind; it was patterned in shades of turquoise blue, rich brown, or green. The climbing plants took advantage of the lattice-work at the sides, and the collection gathered together was both rare and beautiful. I had my especial favourites, one of them being an alocatia, with a large leaf and a very curious appendage attached to the underside of the main rib. A kind of cup formed a leaf that split into two points, a reservoir, which in the morning was sure to contain a bright drop of the purest water, which was probably distilled from the succulent stalk. This appendage was liable to be torn as the leaf was gradually unfurled.

* An ancient manufactory which has degenerated. It once produced the fire tiles that still adorn the tombs of the old Talpur mirs. Some little time ago these tombs were repaired at the expense of Government, and I was fortunate enough to obtain some of the tiles that had been removed. The colouring of all was beautiful, but that of one in particular was exquisite. A mingled hue of blue and green, such as I never before saw on any pottery. This tint, however, I was told, was not the original shade, but was due to chemical changes taking place in the lapse of time.

The little alocatia metallica, a native of Borneo, had a rich, bronze-coloured surface of great beauty. A lovely little begonia had its long, lop-sided tender green leaves flecked with white, whilst the underside was bright rose colours. The vanilla planifolia, an orchid with a bright green succulent leaf, threw down aerial roots which penetrated the ground and ran along under the surface. At night the leaves gave forth a delightful fragrance. The plant apparently flourishes well in the moist, warm climate of the Goa territory, but its introduction has not been attended with profitable results. It is three years before it bears the long pod, which is the valuable part, and I was told by the growers that they were obliged to employ children to carry the pollen, as the insect that fertilizes it in its Mexican home does not exist in India. There is a species of vanilla that is reared with great success in the West Indies. Very gay was the exterior of this verdant chamber. The antigonem (a native of the Sandwich Islands) cast abroad its long pink sprays of blossom, another climber, placed near

it for sake of contrast, bore masses of blue flowers, and there were several species of the passion flower. One of them had a blood-red blossom that was superbly beautiful. There was also the snail-creeper (*phaseolus*), which is much esteemed among the natives for the sweet smell of its contorted blossoms. One end of the house was quite covered by a pitcher-plant (*nepenthes*); the bright green leaves, of a horseshoe form, were very handsome. Some of these ended in a tendril bearing at its extremity the curious termination from which it takes its common name, a kind of bladder of light green spotted over with dark red. It was amusing to watch the development of this curious production of nature; at first it looked like an insect, but as it grew it bore a ludicrous resemblance to a pert little barn-door cock. Its fine foliage often shelters a small bright green snake, which, though not deadly, is venomous. Set around the betel-house were many sorts of canes and variegated sedges, with clumps of the elegant Nile grass. The slender leaves grew in whorls, and turned gracefully over. Ferns

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there were from the trembling black-stemmed maidenhair to the alsophila gigantea, one of the monarchs of the order, of which there were several specimens, some of them standing ten feet from the ground, collected in the jungles during many a shooting excursion. In order to preserve them, the stems were swathed in moss, which was kept damp. The foliage burst forth from the top, looking like an umbrella. The hard, scaly stem of this fern makes an excellent polish, and is sometimes made into candle-sticks and rustic ornaments. A little green frog frequents the tree fern; give it a shake of the stem, and the creature springs, uttering a succession of sharp clicks. It has been known to fasten itself upon the face of a disturber of its rest. Above our betel-house, "the murmur of the happy leaves sang all the golden day."*

One of the trees that rustled thus joyously was the kurdal, or kargul (*sinapis*), a little tree with a rough bark. It bore small, white,

* Japanese song. See "History of Ceylon," by Sir Emmerson Tennant, vol. i, p. 51. See also Birdwood's "Products of Bombay Presidency," p. 233.

sweet-scented flowers, which are succeeded by long pods containing pungent seeds. The natives mix them into their curry powder. A high interest attaches to this tree, for it was doubtless the mustard of the Scriptures, "in the branches of which the birds of the air lodged."

In the neighbourhood of the kargul was a tree which I took to be a representative of our mountain ash. The foliage might be a little darker, but the rich clustered red berries were identical.

There is something very strange in the wide diffusion of the superstitions attaching to the rowan. Pliny has it that if a serpent is so surrounded by a fence of ash leaves that he cannot escape except by passing through fire, he will prefer the fire rather than pass through the leaves. The Scandinavian gods took counsel together under the ash. Everyone is familiar with the Scottish notion that a sprig of the same tree placed above the bed guards the sleeper from evil, and will remember that the old postman carries a branch of it to guard

him on his way through solitary and suspected spots.

It is a curious coincidence that Bishop Heber at the foot of the Himalayas finds the same notions attached to a tree of similar appearance. He comes upon a mimosa, which he takes to be a mountain ash.

"I asked if it did not bear any fruit; they answered, 'No, but it is a very noble tree, being called the imperial tree, for its excellent properties; it was useful as a preservative against magic. A sprig worn in the turban, or suspended over the bed, was a perfect security against all spells of the Evil Eye, etc., insomuch that the most formidable wizard would not, if he could help it, approach its shade.'" The Bishop goes on to express his surprise that the superstitions which in European countries are attached to the rowan, should be in India connected with a tree of similiar appearance. "Which nation," he writes, "has been the imitator, or from what common stock are all these common notions derived?"*

* Bishop Heber's "Journal," vol. i, p. 287.

An article in the Journal of the Asiatic Society led me to believe that this tree might be the vibhitaka of the natives. "This tree," it says, "has considerable interest for the student of Sanskrit, as its fruit was used in the most remote antiquity for the purpose of gambling. The Rig-Veda repeatedly refers to its fatal fruits, the rolling of which on the table enslaves the heart of the gambler. All over India, Káli, the evil spirit of gambling, is supposed to reside in this tree." The writer continues, "I was examining the stones of an old mosque when suddenly my assistant darted off, with an exclamation of terror. He informed me that he had the misfortune to step into the shade of a vibhitaka tree, and had therefore become impure. The fruits," continues the writer, "resemble both in size and colour those of the mountain ash."*

A pomegranate enlivened the shade with its scarlet blossoms. This tree the Parsees place, I know not why, near their Towers of Silence, and they use it in purificatory

* Extra number, vol. x, p. 1.

ceremonies. The wood-carrying moth of the genus Oiketius is to be found suspended from it. The larvæ construct for themselves cases which they surround with sticks an inch and a half long. These they bind together with silken threads. The male escapes from its prison, but it is the lifelong home of the female. It was curious to watch the creature at work. Its little head and a bit of its shining brown body would appear, but the slightest sound caused it to shrink into its case, the end of which it would close by means of silken cords.

In Europe this insect is sometimes called the "Lictor," in consequence of the resemblance borne by its abode to the Roman fasces. The Hindoos give it a name which signifies "billets of fire-wood," and regard it as a human being, who, as a punishment for stealing wood, is condemned to undergo this strange metempsychosis.*

One day we found on a rough-barked tree a

* The doctrine of metempsychosis has a strange but by no means pleasant fascination for the Hindoos. The object of everyone of their religious systems is to put a stop to further transmigrations.

little beetle. Had it not been on a journey we should never have noticed it, for it was ingeniously concealed under a tuft of hoary moss, which nature had given it the means of attaching to its back. In this sheltered place some cages containing Tussera moths were suspended; they had all set off from Poona in the cocoon, but some of them made their escape from it whilst in the carriage, which was inconvenient. They were handsome downy creatures, mustard colour and brown, measuring from five to six inches across between the tips of the wings. The peculiarity of this insect is the one round spot of fibrous substance that glitters in the centre of each wing. It was larger than a pea, and objects could clearly be distinguished when looked at through it. The presence of these spots was at one time a puzzle to naturalists, but it is now conjectured they are thus placed in order to attract the attention of birds away from the vital parts of this heavy, defenceless creature. They feed upon the leaves of a very common fig. The caterpillar is remarkably handsome, of a brilliant green

tint, and dotted with frosted gold. The cocoons are nearly as large as plovers' eggs, and of a dingy brown colour. The substance they yield has more the appearance of hemp than silk. When woven it makes a fabric resembling poplin. These moths were at first hung up in cages in the verandah, but they subjected us to a singular inconvenience, and had to be removed: they attracted the attention of stranger moths of the same species. There was illness in the house, and the windows of the sick-room being of necessity open, the visitors flew in, fluttering about the night-lamp, knocking over bottles, and, worst of all, by beating against the canvas ceiling, from which they could not be dislodged, turning it into a big drum. They must have travelled from a distance, as there are none known within twenty miles of Belgaum.

Overtopping most of its neighbours rose a stately palmyra-tree, strong and proud, all unconscious that it cradled a deadly enemy. Some bird in its flight had dropped into the moist base of a decayed leaf, a seed, one of those figs

appropriately called the Thugs of the vegetable world. This seed had germinated, and the shoot had, snake-like, curled itself round the wooden pillar, putting forth one or two green leaves, and throwing down a pendulous root-stem. When first it showed itself it was fifteen feet from the ground; in two years it was firmly rooted in the earth. After the manner of its kind, it will kill its supporter. The rootlets encase the lower part of the stem of the palm, and become the corrugated bowl of the new tree, from which the true stem with its branches and foliage will spring up. Out of the five palms that grew in our domain, three were afflicted with this murderous parasite. During our absence the coffee plants had grown considerably, but their state was not satisfactory. The stems of the young shoots were covered with warty excrescences, which enclosed the larvæ of the lecanum coffeæ, so much dreaded by coffee planters. The number of eggs contained in one of these scales is enormous, as many as six hundred and ninety-one having been counted, and the vigour of the plants is

destroyed by the dirt accumulated by them. When this species of the coffee shrub was introduced from Africa into India, the berries and green leaves were used solely for curry, and the pretty starlike white blossoms were strung into necklaces for the idols.

Near the coffee-trees I had a little plantation of the cotton shrub, which comes from America. We had brought the seeds from Goa, where this importation is freely grown. The children picked the black specks out of their soft white bed and helped to sow them in boxes. The plants sprang up with the utmost vigour; in three weeks were bedded out; and in ten months had attained a height of twelve feet, and were very bushy. The leaf was very like that of the Oriental plane; the bell-shaped flowers were canary-coloured, red, or brown. The pod, which was enveloped in a deeply-fringed triangular husk, resembled a green cob-nut. I was proud of watching "the wool grow" on my own cotton-trees, and I made myself a bower in their shade.

Close to them were some bushes of the beau-

tiful treble datura, the seed of which is a strong narcotic. If taken in any quantity death ensues. It is the drug used by the fraternity of poisoners. It is administered to travellers in sweetmeats by benevolent-looking old men who fall into conversation with victims in the Dhárams Sálas, or at the camping stations. Robbery is generally the incentive to the crime, but sometimes it is practised as a horrible kind of religious rite. The seed in our neighbourhood is used in order to throw people into a half-frenzied state, in which they are supposed to see into the future and to possess the spirit of prophecy.

The confiding tameness of bird and beast, the result of gentle treatment, added much to the pleasure of these garden hours. I watched many a little scene among them. The bulbuls would sing their song in the branches, hop down and look up at me knowingly with their bright eyes. The solemn crows, handsome birds with grey feathers on the neck, occupied themselves in a variety of mischievous ways. They "were always for evil and never for good." One of

their amusements was to pick threads out of the buckets belonging to the well, and they were costly articles. One day, a strange bird, a little less in size than a dove, came pecking about. Its bill and its stiff crest, all in a line, looked like a bit of stick thrust through its head. "Hush," said a voice at my side. "The king that was, the hoopoe that is now." The bird alarmed erected its crest into a beautiful crescent, and was off in a second. The Indian hoopoe (*upupa nigripennis*) is smaller than the European variety.

We watched a pretty sight on one occasion, but that was near the house—a palm-squirrel teaching its little one to walk. The young creature had got into a position that alarmed the mother, who chirped out her instructions, and the young one curled itself up into a little ball which the parent bird took in her mouth, as a cat would have done her kitten, and conveyed to a place of safety. One of these pretty creatures one day stole quietly down the bole of a tree, and, approaching a lizard, ran its tongue along the reptile's crested spine, the

latter remaining motionless the while, happy, no doubt, in being freed from some parasite agreeable to the squirrel's palate. Once there was a terrible fight between two bloodsucker lizards, that like the chameleon have the power of changing colour. The combatants met round the shaft of a palm-tree; upon which their necks and heads became a glowing scarlet. After a moment's pause, on they rushed to the fight, grappling with one another so fiercely as to lose hold of their support, and tumble down into a manure-pit. As soon as they had recovered from their surprise, the battle was renewed. With the utmost fury, one of them seized the other by the thick part of the tail. Struggling on they gained the hedge and were lost to sight. The crimson blush of this creature and the milder hues assumed by the true chameleon are both in their way protective. With one it means, "You had better leave me alone; you will not find me good to eat," whilst the greens and browns of the other enable it to escape observation amid the stones and herbs of the sun-baked plains it inhabits.

The trail of the serpent crossed the paths even of this Eden. I was roused from a reverie by hearing from a little distance loud and prolonged cries of distress, proceeding from the back of the patcherries (the married soldiers' quarters). On going to the spot I found a Portuguese cook boy who appeared to be cruelly ill-treating a fine fowl. On my approach it escaped from him, and fluttered into a hedge some yards off. "What have you been doing?" I exclaimed, turning to the lad, when what should I see lying in the palm of his hand but the still head of the bird, looking as if it had been dead for hours, and there was the body still moving. The boy had most deliberately sawed off the head with one of the blunt sickles used by the peasants. The flood of unkind words that escaped me were quite lost upon him, so I turned my wrath upon a soldier who was looking on. "How could you, an Englishman, allow such cruelty?" I exclaimed. "Tommy Atkins'" face was incapable of expression, but his eyes became rounder than ever. "Lor, marm," he replied, "the lad has

only been a-killing of a cock for the colour-sergeant's dinner." "I should like to see your heads sawed off; and as for the colour-sergeant, I wish him an indigestion." Having launched this truly feminine speech, I hastily retreated.

Our pets were a great source of pleasure. The brown brothers, Grouse and Drake, still flourished, but they had learned wisdom, and no longer expected to see a covey of partridges rise when they heard the rifles snap at parade. The most interesting of our new acquisitions was Miss Jennie, with her wonderful ways, who looked like a sedate and shrivelled little old woman. She was the tamest and handsomest of monkeys, with a dash of green on the thick part of her fur, but underneath the body it was quite white and most delicately clean. The queer little face, with the keen eyes that never kindled, was encircled by a white frill. She was a "Hanuman" monkey, and was held in high esteem by the Hindoo servants. Her home was in a box set on a high pole, but she took her meals on the smooth-topped shaft of

a Jain pillar, and she had a rustic bench to scramble over. On this she was perpetually catching the chain at first, but she evidently brought her mind to bear upon the subject, and soon learned to disentangle it for herself. She had one singular trait of character: she accepted the caresses of the gardeners, who were very kind to her, with the utmost urbanity when she thought herself to be alone with them; but no sooner did a European appear upon the scene than she faced round, pulled the most grotesque faces at her dark friends, and treated them with every sign of contempt. On one occasion she was seen to be amusing herself with the light silvery tail of some palm-squirrel that, tempted by her food, had ventured within reach of her clutches. Nothing would induce her to part with the trophy, dear to her as the brush to the huntsman.

There is said to be a very old feud between the monkeys and the squirrels. The Rámayana recounts how Ráma requested Nála, one of the monkey chiefs, to help him to throw a bridge across from the

mainland to Lanka (Ceylon). This Nála undertook to do in a month, although the distance between the mainland and the island was eight hundred miles. Of all the monkeys none worked so hard as Haunaman, until he became enraged with Nála, because he passed the stones with his left hand. For a time he was appeased by Ráma's assurance that such was the ordinary practice of masons. When the bridge had extended one hundred and sixty miles, hundreds of squirrels came to assist. They rolled their bodies among heaps of dust, and going to the bridge they shook off the dust, and thus effectually filled the minute crevices. The ill-natured Haunaman, not appreciating the services of these little creatures, flung numbers of them into the sea. With tearful eyes the survivors came to Ráma, and said, "O lord, we are grievously annoyed by Haunaman." Summoning Haunaman into his presence Ráma thus addressed him: "Why dost thou dishonour the squirrels? Let everyone contribute to the work according to his ability." Haunaman blushed, and the benevolent Ráma patted him

on the back and forgave him, but from that day to this there has been ill-will between the monkeys and the squirrels.

CHAPTER X.

Life in Belgaum—Young Panthers for Sale—A Perambulating Shrine—Sport in the Ghâts—The Jains—Confession—Visit to the House of a Brahmin—Domestic Customs—Government Girls' School—Child-widows—Needlework—Flower-dealers of Bundelkund—A Sad History—A Visit to the Bazaar—Visit to a Mission School—Jealousy of the Brahmins—Limited Intercourse with Hindoos.

IN Belgaum there was a delightful sense of freedom that was not to be enjoyed in Máhableshwur, where an enemy might be lurking under any bush, and solitary strolls after dusk were not to be enjoyed. Then in the Southern plains the moonlight, if not so bright as on the hills, is more luminous, and seems to pervade the atmosphere instead of shedding a distinct light from above. What a climate! when instead

of going to rest one could inhale perfumes unknown to the day, and watch the ghostly flittings of the moths as they carried the pollen from bush to bush, hovering round the great moon-flowers, and all the white and yellow-tinted blossoms that loved to look up at the stars. It was a pleasant life in which many a passing event would vary the morning hours. It might be the appearance of a couple of men carrying a basket slung from a pole with young panthers to sell. "Only a pound, they were very cheap." The little creatures, tied down so that the lid could be raised, were very beautiful, with skins that shone like satin, a rich brown along the spine, which faded into a creamy white upon the flanks. Very dark, although as yet not quite black, were the "rose leaves" that would in time unite and form rings. One longed to caress the animals, but their amber eyes were all ablaze, and they would stiffen their little whiskers, and look intensely spiteful. Such beasts are awkward pets, and, though they must eventually be parted with, they are seldom sent away until they give

their protector a fright or a touch of their claws.

Tiger and panther skins are brought up to the authorities, when the reward offered by Government for the destruction of such animals is claimed. If they were unusually fine, they were sent up for us to look at. Among them there would occasionally—but rarely—be a black panther skin. A black panther-cub is an anomaly in hue, an intruder into a family, but such a creature is more commonly to be met with in some districts than in others. Those sent to us came from the ghâts above the Goa territory. The fur is really brown, but the tint is so dark that it must be exposed to a bright light in order to render the "rose leaves" perceptible. The beauty of all skins depends upon the youth of the creatures, and the season in which they are taken.

A strange-looking fellow, bearing to all appearance a Punch-and-Judy box upon his back, was captured near the compound. The man was a kind of wandering religious mendicant. His face, body, and arms were streaked all over

with some grey substance, possibly funeral ashes, or mud that he might have brought from the Ganges. The apparatus he carried was a perambulating shrine. He drew up the leather curtain, disclosing a family of divinities gaily attired, along with the brass lamps, trays, spoons, &c., used in the sacred ceremonies. On each side was a handsomely-embossed copper plate, on which a hunting-scene, which appeared to be very old, was represented. A row of metal bells was hung on the exterior, the top of which was ornamented by the likeness of a human face, surrounded by a glory of gilded spiral rays. This was said to represent Buddha Vier. Buddha figures in the Hindoo Pantheon as the ninth Avatar of Vishnu.* The little shrine and its dishevelled bearer would have made an interesting sketch, but the man

* It is not surprising that Buddha should be introduced into the Hindoo Pantheon, but it is truly astonishing to find him enrolled in the authorised martyrology now in use in the Roman Catholic Church, and in the corresponding manual of worship in the Greek Church. For the explanation of this curious fact, see the introduction to Mr. Rhys Davis's "Buddhist Birth Stories," p. xxxvi.

was in a hurry to be off, saying that he was due at the residence of some petty chief in the neighbourhood, where he had promised to light up and exhibit his shrine.

Occasionally the gentlemen would go to the ghâts for a week's sport. Twenty miles off there were plenty of bisons and cheetahs, and small game was plentiful. From their camp they would dispatch coolies with the results of the chase: huge marrow-bones—and the marrow of the bison is excellent—and tongues large in proportion. The appearance of the first tongue served up was a shock to our nerves; it was of a leaden colour, and eminently suggestive of death from cholera. We were, however, relieved in mind on being told that it was only the result of the carelessness of the cook, who had forgotten the saltpetre. Carts would sometimes arrive with ghastly trophies. The head of one bison was enormous. The poor fellow that had owned it was a well-known beast, the tyrant of the jungle. His horns were almost split away with fighting. His hide was used to cover wicker-baskets,

his hoofs were made into boxes, and the head itself was set up and placed in the dining-room, where it looked down upon many a feast. I sometimes fancied that it regarded us with an air of reproach.

The painted partridges, the florican (a small bustard), the jungle-cock, the hazel grouse, the snipe, and many a bird of gorgeous sheen, were prettier presents. We were to have had the skin of a fine rock-snake, which is a kind of shagreen; but, before the order to preserve it had been given, the creature was burnt by the beaters, in order to appease its spirit. Nothing do natives dislike more than being accessory to the death of a snake. "What!" said the gardener, when the immediate execution of one discovered in the verandah had been ordered, "would you kill a creature that has been here for a thousand years?".

I agreed with a friend to make an early expedition into the region of the bazaar. The dew-laden landscape was delightfully fresh, the tranquil lake looked as though "slumbering still." Just one beam of sunshine rested upon the summit of Cheetah Hill.

First we stepped into a half-finished building that was to be a Jain temple. The Jains, descendants of the Buddhists, stand alone in the existence among them of confession. It is, they consider, an absolute obligation on all to go once a year to a priest, make confession to him, and obtain from him absolution. But some of them make a regular habit of so doing, and have fasts and other deprivations imposed upon them as penances. The Jains live in perpetual fear of taking animal life, as they are thorough believers in the doctrine of transmigration. They now number, although their religion once bid fair to be the dominant one in India, not more than three hundred and eighty thousand, at least half of whom are in the Bombay Presidency, where they are principally agriculturists.* But our ultimate object was to visit the house of a Brahmin, in which—rare privilege for a lady—my friend was welcome. It was a two-storied house standing in the principal street of the bazaar. The exterior had a good deal of quaint carving and

* See "Modern India," by Professor Monier Williams.

colour about it, but it did not prepare the visitor for the real extent of the structure. We were met by the owner, a large, fat, light-complexioned man, with a rose-coloured turban of innumerable neat folds, so made up as to turn over at the back into a curious little curved point. This form is said to be copied from the peculiar shape of the mango fruit. He conducted us into a passage from which opened large rooms, dark, except for the light received through doorless apertures. The passage led to a small court principally occupied by a sunken reservoir, a kind of impluvium, which was not the only arrangement reminding one of the interior of a Pompeian house. In the middle of it stood the family altar with the sacred basil-bush, worshipped night and morning as a type of the vegetable creation—a dwarfed kind of tree worship. Beyond was a longer court, with benches set under a group of wavy plantains. Wooden galleries, enlivened by coloured frescoes representing divinities and animals, looked down upon it.

Under the verandah an old woman was grinding corn between two stones, just as her ancestors may have done thousands of years before her. The kitchen, or what in an old English farm-house would be called "the keeping-room," was near. It was large, lofty, and well-lighted by windows set under the roof, and barred. No glimpse of the outer world could distract the attention of the inmates from their domestic duties. A bright wood fire was burning upon a raised hearth, and before it a handsome young woman, clad in blue garments with red edges, was cooking rice. Near the door squatted an elderly female, who was making a good meal off a pile of crumpets. Had our shadows fallen upon the food it would have been thrown away. Had we crossed the cow-dunged floor with our shoes on, some expensive ceremony of purification might have been thought necessary. Numbers of brass vessels polished to perfection were scattered about on the floor. Tables there were none. The Brahminical code directs that all food should be prepared and eaten upon the ground.

The place was exquisitely clean. As we repassed the dark chambers, our host darted into one of them and returned with a fat brown baby of two months old. Its great liquid eyes were rendered unnaturally brilliant by the powdered antimony with which they were encircled. Ages ago the use of this substance as a preventative of ophthalmia, and also as a powerful remedy in that painful disease, was accidentally discovered by the priests of Egypt.* The dark rooms were the sleeping apartments of the women. To each of them—an invariable custom which prevails in every grade of Hindoo society—was attached a closet, entirely reserved for the use of the fair one, characteristically called, from remote times, "the chamber of tears," or "of anger." In ancient writings we read of kings and princes who wept and tore their hair on the threshold of "the chamber of anger." The men of the family usually pass the night in the verandah.

After nine o'clock in the evening, every door in a native town is shut, every light extin-

* See Works of Thomas De Quincey, vol. xi, p. 118.

guished. A stranger is startled by the number of corpse-like figures, apparently arrayed in winding-sheets, that meet his eye at each turn. In the morning the people are far from early; they have a great dislike to exposing themselves to the dew.

Our next visit was to the government girls' school. Hindoo schoolmasters are in general fat and sleek, and the one who received us was no exception to the rule. We found a nice bright room opening upon a garden. There were about thirty girls, and they were dressed in their best, as they expected to see us. Some of them were engaged in tracing the fine sharp-pointed letters of the Máhratti characters with reed pens. Others were copying texts, and coarsely illuminating them. Two or three of the pupils were desired to read aloud in turns. This they did in the monotonous sing-song manner that the Hindoos are said to have caught from the mutterings of the Mohammedans over their Koran. Two girls, nearly grown up, were distinguished from the others by their plain dresses and the absence of orna-

ments. They read English aloud with facility, but also in an expressionless half chaunting tone. I inquired as to what use our language would be to them. The master said that these young creatures were child-widows, who would never have homes of their own, or husbands to provide for them, so that they were being taught more than was usual, in order that they might be able to gain an honest livelihood by teaching.* In the middle of the room there was a table covered with indifferent specimens of fancy-work. This sort of needle-work is all that Eastern females (with the exception of the Parsee ladies, who embroider beautifully in silks,) ever accomplish. To Europeans it seems to be an inversion of the order of nature that all useful needle-work should be in the hands of men.† The master of the school was a proficient in the art

* The Máhrattas permit the re-marriage of widows under conditions which assign to them a part share in a husband, and to the man another wife to manage. These conditions, however, are considered to be so unfavourable that such marriages seldom occur.

† In Poona I was often diverted by seeing the driver of a hired vehicle, who conveyed parties down to the places where

of embroidering the soft woollen shawls formerly so prized in England. Hindoos have not only a wonderfully fine sense of touch, but greatly appreciate beauty of form and colour. But their designs are not always understood by Europeans, who love the uniformity that nature herself always manages to balance or conceal. The girls looked intelligent, and they were certainly pretty. Most of them were Brahmini, and had the peculiar oval form of head usually to be found in the females of that caste. Some of them had the crimson mark across the forehead which I believe indicates the child-wife. They were brilliant as butterflies in their bright-hued saris and numerous ornaments.

Take for instance the schoolmaster's little daughter. She wore mustard-coloured drapery bordered with red; colours that set off the jet black hair and the pale brown skin. The drapery, confined round the waist by a band of silver, was just so short as to display the heavy

the bands played, get quietly off his box, squat down in front of his horse, take out his needle-work and sew away with the most patient industry.

anklets and the filigree toe-rings that set off the charming dimpled feet. The shapely arms were covered with bracelets, some of which were of gold beautifully wrought. She had long gold chains suspended from the neck, and a nose ring with an emerald drop (an ornament mentioned in the Old Testament). The necklace of gold coins struck with the figure of the Virgin standing with draped feet upon the crescent moon, looked strange indeed upon the neck of this little heathen. Such coins are Venetian, and are often seen in India, where they are prized for the purity of their gold. They are relics of the period when the trade of the East reached Europe through the great Republic.

As we returned through the bazaar we stopped at a flower-stall. My friend wished to get some roses for a sick sister attached to a little community of teaching nuns which we were to visit on our way home. Long strings of pink and white blossoms were festooned about, and there were baskets full of starry jessamines, the perfume of which was all too sweet, and rich crowns of yellow flowers. This abundance is

the chief luxury of the people. The trade is in the hands of a particular caste of folks who come from Bundlekund; but, in spite of their delightful employment, they are a most disreputable set, and are constantly being brought before the magistrates for assault.

When the gates of the convent garden closed behind us, it seemed to be quite another world. My friend went to the sick-room, leaving me with one of the sisters, a young Scotch lady. She had a very sad history. Close upon the day appointed for her marriage the gentleman to whom she was engaged jilted her. Heart-broken, she joined a Protestant sisterhood, shortly after becoming a Roman Catholic, and taking upon her the vows of her present order. We sat and talked about "The braes of Angus," and of people with whom we were mutually acquainted. I felt nervous, but not a trace of emotion was visible on the calm pale face that was shaded by the flapping white bonnet peculiar to the Sisterhood of St. Vincent de Paul. How strange to be now a Sister of Mercy in India, and but a few years ago a "bonnie lassie,"

galloping her rough pony over the heathery hills of far-away Scotland!

Taking a great interest in the daily affairs of native life, I was glad to make another expedition into the bazaar. It was with the wife of the gentleman attached to the London Mission. This lady had a little school there, which had only been established a few weeks. The room that had been hired for the purpose gave upon the main street, and there was no verandah. It was, however, a large, airy chamber. Huge rough-chiseled beams, black with age, supported the ceiling; the house to which it belonged had been handsome in its day. The children were assembled, the older ones sitting on benches, the little things squatting on mats with their backs against the wall. They were a wild crew, and differed much from one another in intelligence. Only two of them—sharp, conceited girls—belonged to the Brahmini caste. Máhrattas preponderated, a class who are steady, but not over-bright. The little Telegus, unkempt creatures, with glittering round eyes, looked as wild as hawks, and very little could be made of them.

Each child was called up to join its class by name. "This one," said the lady, "is called after a goddess; the name of that one means 'Bright-eyes.'" That of a third was Lotus-flower, and so on through a long list. They were called upon to say in Máhratti the letters and numbers that were chalked upon a board. If one failed, another was quick in taking advantage of her deficiency, and showing her own superior knowledge.

In every class there was much prompting and nudging, and arranging of saris. Schoolgirls are of the genus irrepressible, and are the same all over the world. The teacher was young and pretty, and the patience she showed was admirable. It was rather severely tried, for a large audience of men was assembled at the windows, through which the air could scarcely pass, being almost excluded by the turbans of the curious. Others, who occupied the doorway, gradually edged into the room, and showed a disposition to act as prompters. Then the lady put up her hand, and the old guardian would clear the place with his long bamboo; but to

little purpose. The crowd re-assembled like bees that had been flipped off a honey-pot, and the scene was enacted over again. The children were by no means ill-behaved, but there was a queer look of wicked intelligence in their eyes, which roused in my mind a shrewd suspicion that they were mentally laughing at us.

How stolid would have been the behaviour of a set of English village children if a dark lady, wrapped up in a sari, with toe-rings, and an ornamental hoop through the cartilage of her nose, had walked in and set herself down to teach them! Though poorly clad, some of the girls had handsome ornaments; one child had a gold coin larger than a shilling suspended from her neck by a dirty bit of string. It bore upon it the effigy of Johannes, King of Portugal, with the date, 1744, finely struck.

Some of the little things had left their nose-rings at home, and the holes which they generally occupied were kept open by bits of stick, after the manner of the Jewish women of biblical times, who for the same purpose introduced a

splinter of wood, when they had taken out their ear-rings.

As we were returning home we had some interesting conversation regarding mission work, but it was confidential. The lady dwelt much upon the trouble and anxiety that she and her husband had experienced regarding a number of little children whom they had rescued from positive starvation during the famine. They clothed them decently, and put them into a disused office in their compound, but no sooner had the creatures got comfortable and plump than they began to grumble as to the nature of their food, some even refusing to eat with the others, "as they were not of the same caste." The adoption of these little ones was regarded with great jealousy by the Brahmins, who, on one pretence or another, got most of them into their power, "only," as the lady said, "to throw them again into the streets and highways to starve, rather than let them run the risk of becoming Christians." I was desirous of knowing if any members of the mission ever made the familiar acquaintance of natives.

"Yes," was the reply, "but only with Hindoo gentlemen. On one occasion we gave an entertainment to some with whom my husband had been brought into contact. They had sweetmeats, and flowers, and pán-supari offered to them and affected to be pleased with our playing and singing. In fact they were so bland and flattering that my husband asked if their ladies would receive a visit from the ladies of his family. 'Yes,' was the reply, 'they would be delighted to see them, not in their houses, that would be impossible, but in the verandahs.' So we never went."

CHAPTER XI.

Military Operations—An Escalade—Hindoo Plays—Construction of an Eastern Drama—The Death of Jagadratha—Plot of the Play—The Pandees—Comparison of the Greek and Hindoo Drama—The Play of Allah-ul-Deen—Allah of the Faith—Second Visit to an Indian Theatre—The Rasecreeda, Ancient Dance of the Gopes, or Milkmaids—May-day in India.

THE peace of the fort was disturbed by threats of invasion from the camp. Camels came to bear away the scaling ladders that had slumbered in the arsenal since the year of the Mutiny, and we were desired to consider ourselves to be in a besieged condition. Our stronghold was to be carried by escalade, by daring assault. In the grey mornings knots of people were to be seen upon the glacis, some of them reconnoitring, others watching the soldiers as they practised

the ascent. With a deep ditch of seventy-two feet wide, and thirty-two feet of wall above its berme, the task was not to all an easy or pleasant one. Some of the men asked to be allowed to fall out, but their request was not listened to. The ladders were very rotten, and their length made them unwieldly, although they were made in two pieces that slipped into one another. One of them broke with the men upon it, but fortunately, beyond a few contusions, there was no bad result.

The eventful morning dawned, and found us under the dew-laden trees, making our way to a bastion that commanded a long stretch of the fosse. We, however, found that it was occupied by part of our gallant defenders, the company that garrisoned the fort; so we sought a more modest position near the sally-port. Music was heard in the distance, mingled with the tramp, tramp of the troops, and up galloped the gallant brigadier with his glittering staff. The orders were shouted out, and the ladders being extended to their utmost length, and reared against the walls, up rushed the officers,

sword in hand, leading their men, and in another moment they were on the battlements grappling with their friendly foes.

It was an interesting sight. Most of the Indian forts were thus carried, the great extent of their ramparts rendering it impossible that they should be efficiently guarded.

I was one evening invited to accompany some friends to a native theatre, where a classical drama was to be acted, and I was glad to profit by the opportunity afforded, as the only piece I had as yet seen was "Shakuntalà," which, although a celebrated and beautiful play, is not so interesting as those taken from the great epic poems which the Hindoos believe to be inspired works. The way in which these poems were originally disseminated is pointed out in the following verses from the Ramayana:*

> "When to the end the tale was brought,
> Rose in the sage's mind the thought:
> Now who throughout this earth will go
> And tell it forth that all may know?"

* See Mr. Griffiths' translation.

The poet sage, having fixed upon fitting messengers, continues:

> "Recite you this heroic song
> In tranquil shades where sages throng,
> Recite it where the good resort
> In lowly home and royal court."

And in the "lowly homes" of the Indian people these stories have been nursed and kept alive by the bhats, or bards, attached to village establishments, who taught them orally to the people, until in later days they came to be written down. When first acted, it would scarcely be a misnomer to call them "mystery plays." They are strictly arranged according to religious rules, and have remained unchanged for centuries. Certain plays are often learned by rote, and are traditional in families. When put upon the stage, they are sometimes made tedious by that love of minute subdivision characteristic of the Hindoo mind, in which every idea is moulded and re-moulded with endless ingenuity. For instance, there are no less than one hundred and forty-four ways in which such passions as love or anger

must be rendered, according to the circumstances in which the hero of the story is placed, and none of the shades will be considered fitting for their display by another character. Language is under like trammels. The hero, the divinities, and the sages speak a modification of Sanskrit; the other male actors make use of the vernacular. The ordinary women utter some jargon supposed to be adapted to their intelligence, just as the dialect of the Athenian women differed from the speech of the men.

The general arrangement of a Hindoo play may be described as follows: The drama may be said to consist of four parts blended together. It commences with a prologue, in which the stage-manager and one of the performers hold a conversation, the object of which is to lay before the audience the supposed name of the author of the play, and make such explanations as may be necessary for the proper elucidation of the story. This part concludes with a lengthy benediction bestowed upon the assembly by certain divinities that are introduced

upon the stage. The drama proper follows. The story is often of an heroic nature, but before its conclusion a kind of mythological burlesque is introduced into it—a strange medley, in which passing events are alluded to, and possibly the peculiarities of the collector or the judge touched upon, and then the usually mild mirth of the Eastern becomes almost uproarious. At daybreak the audience is dismissed with a second long benediction.

The general action is prolonged by the musicians, who not only strike in with musical passages and appropriate chords, but enter freely into impromptu conversations with the manager. This group never leave the stage. The play I was about to see was called, "The Death of Jayadratha," a great favourite with the people. A good old story of the battle-field, that turns upon the thirst of the Pagan for revenge. It is taken from the Máhabharata, and tells of the struggle for royal supremacy which took place between the five demi-gods, the Pandu brothers, and their cousins the Hundred Kurnes, in which Vishnu, incarnate

in the person of Krishna, gives his aid to Arjun, his favourite votary. Judertha, known as the King of Men, the twins Nakula and Sahadeva (the Castor and Pollux of Hindoo mythology), and the great club-tearing Bhima (their Hercules). In order to enable me to understand the performance, a programme of the music and a sketch of the story (the latter written by a Hindoo gentleman) were sent to me. The music consisted of chords and bars to be introduced occasionally; such as, "soft, serious music," four bars; three bars "hurry;" one bar "surprise." "Slow, solemn music till in clouds"—one chord "lively;" "grand burst," full band—"crash."

The story of "Jayadrathavadha," "The Death of Jayadratha," runs as follows. I give it as it was written for me.

"SCENE I.—After a short conversation between the clown and the manager of the theatre, Bhâwani (goddess) will appear to bless the actors, and then the play will begin.

"SCENE II.—Arjun and Krishna, when returning from the field of battle, have evil omens

on the road, and come back to their camp with heavy hearts.

"SCENE III.—Seeing Dhárma (or Bhima) overwhelmed with sorrow, Arjun asks why he grieves, and is told of the dying state of Albimanque (Arjun's son), of which they had been informed by a messenger from Kilas (Heaven). Arjun and Krishna, on hearing this, return to the field of battle, in order to find Albimanque.

"SCENE IV.—Arjun, approaching his son, finds him in the agonies of death. He tells his father that, when he was quite exhausted, Jayadratha, the brother-in-law of one of his enemies, the Kurnes, kicked him, and on account of this indignity he could not die happily. In order to console him Arjun makes a vow, to the effect that, if he cannot succeed in killing Jayadratha next day before sunset, he will burn himself. Hearing this vow Albimanque dies contented.

"SCENE V.—To make Arjun more powerful Krishna takes him in a dream to Kilas, where Sheva gives him a boon, after which he is brought down to earth again.

"SCENE VI.—When the Kowrawas (the enemies) hear of this vow, they prevail upon Gura Droma to promise to save Jayadratha from the consequences of his wicked conduct, and from their army.

"SCENE VII.—With the assistance of Krishna, who acts as charioteer to him, Arjun succeeds in routing the army of the enemy, and goes to the centre of his camp, where, his horses being tired, he forms a wall of arrows, and rests himself. There he falls asleep, and longs for his wife, Subhadra,* the sister of Krishna. Krishna presents her to him in a dream.

"SCENE VIII.—The battle is renewed, and

* The Pandus came of the Lunar race, and are thought by some people to be Tartars, who found their way into India through the defiles of the Himalayas, which would account for their practising polyandry. Subhadra was wife to all five brothers. In the Epic, the father of this lady is represented as being shocked at the proposal of the five for the hand of his daughter. "You who know the law," he says, "must not commit an unlawful act which is contrary to the usage of the Vedas." They reply, "The law, O king, is subtle. We do not know its way. We follow the path which has been trodden by our ancestors in succession."

continues up to evening. Krishna sees that, without help, Jayadratha cannot be killed; he therefore places his sudarshan (his particular weapon) on the sun, and hides it, making a false evening. Seeing the sun set, Arjun prepares a pile of wood to burn himself. The Kowrawas and Jayadratha come along rejoicing to see their most powerful enemy die. While Arjun is turning round the pile, and is about to leap into it, Krishna removes his sudarshan from the sun, and makes it visible; at the same time he shows Jayadratha to Arjun, who kills him with a single arrow."

These performances usually commence about an hour before midnight; but when European ladies attend them, which is seldom, notice is given, and they commence a little earlier. A word to the manager is also necessary, in order that the burlesque may be conducted with fitting decorum. The theatre, although nicely got up, was but a long yard with side galleries, and the usual area was roofed in with canvas. The audience, which was mostly composed of Brahmins, presented a cheerful aspect with the

spotless white robes and red turbans. The curtain being drawn up, disclosed a low throne, on which reposed the elephant god Gunpati, who is always present on such occasions, as being the god of learning and of wisdom, and the great remover of obstacles. He has but one tusk, and is a funny fellow.

Presently a messenger, a kind of Hindoo Mercury with little clothing and curious sectarial marks upon him, enters to herald in Bháwani, the most blood-thirsty divinity in the whole Pantheon. The goddess was personated by a handsome youth gorgeously attired. Her robe was of gold and red, blood-red, as became her character; and from the back of her neck arose a magnificent semi-circle of peacocks' feathers, the insignia of royalty. A dialogue, half said, half sung, ensued between the celestial pair. Gunpati spoke with an ironical air, but Bháwani comported herself with dignity. A solemn fire glowed in her dark eyes, which were rendered unnaturally brilliant by the vermillion that lay upon the face, and the black powder that marked the straight brow, and

hung upon the sweeping lashes. It was tediously long, but it was at last terminated by the manager and the clown, who, amidst the derisive laughter of the audience, fairly hustled the heavenly personages off the stage. It was appalling to see the divinities to whom millions of people bow down in worship treated with such indignity.

In due time the play proper commenced. Arjun, a man of huge stature, entered, accompanied by Krishna, both magnificently dressed. In these theatres there is little change of scenery, though what there is, is pretty. The costumes, which are strictly arranged according to tradition, are both curious and handsome. Again a tediously long dialogue ensued. Hindoos are gifted with remarkable fluency, and their memory (almost purely mechanical) is astonishing. They will speak for an hour without tripping, but often without the least inflection of voice; and, as they do not always understand what they are saying, the effect is naturally flat and wearisome.

"Observe the people," said my friend.

"Though the actors are good of their sort, the listeners have often heard these speeches better recited, and, quick to find fault, they are laughing in their sleeves. But listen to those chords; Krishna is about to execute a war-dance."

The god slowly described an oval with a gliding motion. "The music of the anklets," so often alluded to in Eastern poetry, would have been silent had it not been for the rhythmic trembling of the limbs (the actor's whole soul was thrown into the performance); but, as passion kindled in the bosom of the "heaven-born," each liquid bell rang out and clashed as, hurrying on, the warrior hurled his spirit into the strife of battle. The movement finally became frantic, frenzy took possession of the youthful form, and his eyes glowed with a strange radiance. I held my breath. The dance was in itself a poem. Gradually the motions slackened, and the curtain fell upon the performance.

The next scene was in the raftered hall of the demi-god brothers, in which the uncles of

the dying Albimanque were seated on the ground. The most prominent figure was that of Bhima, gigantic in size, grasping an enormous club. The celestial messenger having announced to them the mournful news, they are overwhelmed with grief, and at this juncture they are joined by Arjun and Krishna.

Arjun relates the evil omens he has encountered, and in their turn the brothers tell him how sadly they have been verified. Then the five, vowing vengeance, make great moan, in their anguish slowly rocking themselves to and fro. The features were masked by red and white paint, laid on so thickly as to render their faces strangely rigid, imparting a kind of supernatural appearance that was very impressive. The scene carried with it an air of supreme antiquity. Some Scythian hero of pre-historic times may have been thus lamented when he fell in battle. The massive armour, patterned with the figures of animals, the richly-embossed bow-case, the twisted turquoise round each brawny neck, brought vividly before my mind's eye the spoils of tombs that are to be seen on

far-distant shores. Their triple crowns were almost identical with the Papal tiara. (This was perhaps no chance resemblance.)

Presently Subhadra appeared upon the scene, accompanied by her mother-in-law and hired mourners. Loud and reiterated were their lamentations as each in her turn passionately narrated instances of the brave deeds and noble characteristics of the dying or dead warrior. The demi-gods rocked themselves to and fro, moaning in cadence; the musicians struck in with wailing sounds in a minor key, and a dead silence reigned among the audience when the curtain fell upon the impressive scene.

Alas, I saw no more of the drama, as some of the party were fatigued. Although nearly two o'clock, it was not half over. But I left the theatre with regret, for I was told that the scenes about to follow, especially that in which Arjun prepares to die, were highly impressive, and well worth the sacrifice of a few hours' sleep.

On first seeing a Hindoo play acted the stranger is predisposed to dwell too much on

certain points of resemblance between it and the ancient Greek drama. But let us hear what "Indian wisdom" has to say upon the subject. We are told that "there are philological reasons for supposing that the germ of the dramatic representations of the Hindoos, as of the Greeks, is to be sought for in public exhibitions of dancing, which consisted first of simple movements of the body, executed in harmony, and accompanied with singing and music. . . . . Plays," continues our author, "were acted in India as early as the reign of Asoka, in the third century, B.C. . . . . At that period intercourse between India and Greece had certainly commenced, but it does not appear that the Hindoos borrowed either the matter or the form of their drama from the Greeks." The same authority goes on to say, "Among the Aryans the drama appears to have arisen naturally, at least its independent origin in Greece and India . . . . . can scarcely be called in question. . . . . In fact the Hindoo drama, while it has certainly much in common with the representations of other na-

tions, has quite a distinctive character of its own, which invests it with great interest."*

The play of "Allah-ul-deen" (Allah of the faith), an historical story, as its name indicates, was the next that I saw. It was performed by a strolling company from Guzerat, who hired a bit of ground generally used for the display of fire-works, Máhratti sports, etc. There they spread a great dilapidated tent, in which they erected a large stage, on which was performed the play I have mentioned.

The story of "Allah-ul-deen" runs as follows: The fancy of Allah was captivated by hearing constantly of the charms of the fair Pudami, one of the most accomplished princesses of her age. She was either the wife or the sister of the Raja of Chittore, a great Rajput prince. Desiring that she should be added to his seraglio, he despatched envoys to demand her hand. His request was indignantly refused, the fair Pudami regarding such a marriage as dishonour. War was the consequence; the Raja is

* See "Indian Wisdom," by Professor Monier Williams, pp. 463, 464.

made prisoner, and carried off to Delhi; and Allah threatens to put him to death. The princess, hearing of her brother's danger, feigns to consent to the marriage, and passes in state to Delhi, taking in her train five hundred Rajput warriors, disguised as women. On her arrival she demands a final interview with her brother, during which the disguised Rajputs fall upon the Moslem guards, defeat them, rescue the Raja and the princess, and carry them off. The part of the play that was given followed pretty closely the accredited story, and was worked out in a series of effective scenes.

Alighting from our bullock-cart, we entered the dim area. The lights, that floated in bell glasses filled with oil, cast an uncertain glimmer upon rough frescoes of gigantic size, and many-limbed divinities, among whom the elephant god (Gunpati), with his trunk reposing upon his bosom, was conspicuous. There was much talking and running about. Dark men stole silently in at the back, and boys squatted on the mud wall that the tent could not altogether conceal. One spectator had the temerity to

pass between the curtain and the foot-lights, a small buffalo, which was seeking its accustomed place of rest in an obscure corner. At last the audience was considered to be complete, the musicians settled themselves to their work, and the curtain rose, disclosing a handsome audience hall, which, with a little alteration of seats and carpets, did duty both for the throne-room at Delhi, and that in which the guddee was placed at Chittore. The decorations were rich in colour, and glittering, and an idea of space was effectively produced by a felicitous arrangement of numerous arches. We were at once introduced to Allah-ul-deen, a tall, dignified man (the part was acted by a Parsee), covered with jewels; his courtiers occupying stools near the throne. On one of them, that was a little higher than the rest, sat Kafoor, the sovereign's villainous favourite, a handsome man, but deadly pale. This, along with the other parts, was acted by Brahmins. The sultan dispatches the favourite to Chittore, with instructions to demand the hand of Pudami.

The curtain rises next upon the audience-hall at Chittore, and we see the Raja, Bhima Sing, seated upon the guddee. According to the Hindoo custom followed by men of high rank, his face was marked with red and white paint. On the reception of the ambassador and his train, Kafoor advances, and in a threatening manner demands the hand of the princess for his master. Upon which Bhima Sing, springing to his feet, utters his famous speech—"War if you will, but the fair Pudami, never." The envoy and his suite retire in confusion. Upon which the lady steps from behind the pardha at the back of the guddee, and, seating herself by the side of her brother, sympathises in his indignation. Her part was played by a handsome boy attired in a splendid sari of crimson satin, edged with heavy gold fringe.

In the scene that follows, Kafoor again presents himself, and delivers a message from his master—"If he may not gain the beautiful Pudami, at least suffer him to come and gaze upon her beauty for once, after which he will retire in peace." Bhima Sing replies, "No

Rajput woman can be seen by a Mussulman; but, in token of his generosity, Allah-ul-deen shall be received, and behold her reflection in a mirror." In the next scene Bhima Sing holds a durbar, and receives the Sultan and his suite with honour, entertains them with a nautch, and sweetmeats and pán-supari are distributed among the guests. A mirror is then brought upon the stage. The fair Pudami advances from behind her brother, and the royal visitor stands transfixed with delight at the loveliness reflected. It was a charming *coup-d'œil.* The Sultan professes himself satisfied, and returns to his camp, hospitably accompanied by the Raja, whom he treacherously makes a prisoner. In a moment all is confusion, the horns blow and the weapons clash—a scene which afforded an opportunity for the display of some very skilful fencing. The flashing weapons gleamed like summer lightning round the golden turbans of the combatants. And here the drama ended. We were not permitted to see the entry of the fair Pudami into Delhi. The five hundred Rajputs disguised as women were too much

for the resources at the theatre's command.

The play being over, we were requested to stay and see the Rasecreeda, the ancient dance of the gopes (milk-maids), and their swains the tipperies, which is still kept up in the hill-country. Given ostensibly in honour of the Indian Bacchus, the laughter-loving Krishna, it is, in fact, a feast that welcomes in the spring. At this season, the lads and lasses of the Gowlee caste repair to the green meadows, pelt one another with sweet-smelling blossoms and snow-white curds, and dance round a gaily-decked pole. It is May-day in the East. Merrily the troop, accompanied by musicians, came dancing in to hoist their pole. Then the four gopes and the four tipperies, bearing in each hand a brilliantly-painted and lackered stick, circle round and round in a merry maze, winding in and out, and striking their weapons together as they meet, in order to mark the measure. Retreating and advancing at certain intervals, each tipperie gracefully knelt before his gope. The musicians, meanwhile, make the air resound with drum and fife, cymbal and

horn, whilst he who clashes the cymbals with much action recites an ancient Sanskrit hymn, a thanksgiving for the return of the welcome season. Then the dancers lower a number of coloured ribbons from the May-pole's flowery crown, and, dancing round first one way and then the other, the joyous crew weave and unweave them, forming various patterns with marvellous dexterity, singing the while, as I was told, instructions for their guidance in the maze. This pleasant picture of rural life in the mountains, which some of our party had witnessed in reality, concluded the entertainment.

CHAPTER XII.

Papers on Hindoo Life—Indigenous Village Schools—School Fees—Second Stage of the School Career—Religious Initiations—Pay and Perquisites of the Schoolmaster—Subjects taught and System pursued—No Regular School-buildings—Modes of Punishment—Advanced Students—Caste Entertainments in Southern Máhratta—The Expenses of Occhavàs.

AS I was known to take a vivid interest in the life and habits of the people among whom I was a sojourner, friends would sometimes send me interesting papers respecting their condition. Some of the subjects treated of were of too deep a nature to find place in a mere work of amusement; but others that relate to the domestic arrangements (most of them unchanged for ages) of the Hindoo people may not be considered uninteresting. They were

written by native gentlemen of education, and in those I give I have thought it best to retain the somewhat quaint language in which they are couched.

Before the introduction of the school system by the British Government, almost every big village in the Southern Deccan had a private school, kept by the master himself, or by the prudent and well-to-do villagers. Many such schools have now disappeared, and the remaining few, being unable to compete with the schools recently established, are fast decaying. The particulars of these schools with regard to the masters, the studies, management, punishments, &c., are the same everywhere, the only difference being in the number of schools and scholars in different states. A Brahmin, Lyngayat, or Mohammedan, according to the caste of the community, carrying off the majority in the village, either himself opens a school, or is selected by the community. In the former case he consults as to the studies of the boys wishing to attend his school, makes himself acquainted with the means of their parents, and

admits them accordingly at rates varying from two annas to one rupee per month. His income in this case, therefore, depends upon the number of boys that attend his school. Sometimes, however, villagers call in a master of some reputation, and contract with him for a fixed sum varying from thirty to three hundred rupees a year. In either case the master is entitled to his hakks, or dues. These are paid by a father in money, cloth, or kind, first at the time when his son begins his school life, and secondly, when he commences the second stage of his literary career—*i.e.*, begins to write on paper, when he invokes help from Sarswati, the goddess of learning, whose symbol is invariably on these occasions drawn on a wooden board chalked and covered with sand (for no slates are used in these schools), or on paper, as the case may be. These occasions of initiation are carefully solemnised, and pán-supari (betel-nut and lime wrapped up in leaves) and prasad (blessed food, generally sweetmeats) are distributed to the boys and the persons present upon the occasion. Besides these gifts, the master

receives from every pupil one fourth anna (about a halfpenny), with cocoa-nut, betel-nut, &c., on the fortnightly school holiday, on the full moon day, and on dark Monday, as well as on other great festivals, such as the Nágas, or snake festival, the feast of lamps, the spring festival, &c.

In order to increase his influence and gains, the master infuses into the minds of the people religious notions respecting himself. He is now and then invited to dinner by the parents of his pupils, and sometimes the rich feed and even clothe him at their own expense. No method is followed in these schools. Registers are seldom kept, nor are time-tables used in order to regulate the studies. There are no classes, as no lessons are given in common. Their aim being solely practical, studies are adapted to the ordinary trades, such as are carried on in every village. The scholars are taught reading, multiplication, tables, addition, subtraction, and division, with the tables of money, weights, and measures used in the district, simple rule of three, and advanced mental

arithmetic. This, along with good official handwriting and MS. reading, is the usual school course. Students are made to settle their hands in the morning (for morning is considered to be the most favourable time for that purpose) on kittas (*i.e.*, copy-bonds), and on imitable writings with a reed pen. This and MS. reading form the morning work. In the afternoon the boys do exercises, and in the evenings they are made to stand in rows and to recite. In some schools the pupils are taught to sing metrical compositions.

The boy who has mastered the above-mentioned subjects can claim to be put in an office or trade—nay, can become a teacher himself. Memory, and not understanding, is cultivated in these schools. Boys learn every subject by heart, and not the least attempt is made to awaken their understandings. There are no regular assistants employed, but the master is sometimes aided by some of his advanced pupils, who teach the beginners. The teacher never refuses to admit boys, and professes to teach satisfactorily about a hundred,

each of them learning a different subject. Boys of from six to sixteen attend such schools.

The classes open at six in the morning, and close at eleven a.m.; they re-open at two p.m., closing altogether when it is too late to do anything more. There are no regular school-houses; the lads assemble in public places, such as temples, maths (*i.e.*, a sort of monasteries used as halting places or lodging places, by those of the Shaiva religion) and musjids, as for them no rent is required to be paid.

These schools are seldom of long standing, as the masters, who are in most cases needy adventurers, close them without ceremony whenever they think that they have a chance of bettering themselves. One thing peculiar in the management of the children is the way in which boys are punished, neither their physical condition nor the nature of their fault being taken into consideration. For a trifling offence a weak child is sometimes tied to a beam, technically called ghodi, sometimes made to incline against the wall in the form of a chair, sometimes made to hold the toes of his

feet, with a bag, or small load, on his back, sometimes made to sit or stand in difficult positions. Although the boys are sometimes punished with stripes and sticks until they bleed, this is rather considered a favour. The peculiar punishments sometimes produce vomiting, and they are often rendered for days together incapable of moving. Strange to say the parents see nothing objectionable in this, and praise the master for his hardheartedness.*

Such is the education given in the schools of native states in Western India. Practical schools they are called, but the few who desire to make themselves acquainted with the higher paths of learning, with astronomy, medicine, Sanskrit, grammar, or the ancient literature of their country, can do so; for, although there are no indigenous schools for the purpose, there

* "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." The Hindoo woman does but act like the Scotch wife, so graphically sketched in that admirable little work the "Memoirs of R. Chambers," when she says to the schoolmaster, "I've brought you our Jock, mind ye lick him weel."

are certain professors of these different branches of knowledge who will undertake to teach, in their own houses, gratis, two or three boys of an advanced age, with their own sons if they have any. These men do not condescend to teach anything but professional lore, and therefore admit only those that have mastered the elementary studies privately, or in the Path Shalars (literally, Lesson Schools). As soon as the pupil begins to understand the subject he is learning he studies by himself, promotes his knowledge by his exertions, and in time sets up on his own account.

There is not much combination among the members of the different caste communities in this part of the country, and therefore an invitation on their part in respect to caste entertainments is not compulsory. People invite their friends and relations to dinner-parties, on the occasions of marriage, anniversary ceremonies, &c. In villages the different caste communities are very small, therefore all the members of the caste are generally invited on

such occasions. In a large town, when any subdivision of a caste has only a small community, all members belonging to that section are invited. A wealthy person belonging to lower castes, such as goldsmiths, tailors, &c., is generally expected to give a caste entertainment on the occasion of a marriage in his house, but, as has been said before, he is not bound to do so. He however, incurs the displeasure of other members of his caste if he does not, and they avoid going to him afterwards. If he be anxious to secure popularity, he consents to give an entertainment by which a reconciliation can be effected. He is, however, sometimes stubborn, and does not care for the displeasure of his caste. He even manages to get some members on his side, and thus becomes the leader of a faction. In still lower classes, when anybody violates the rules of his caste, he is required to give an entertainment.

The expenses of Oochavas (festivals in honour of the gods) are generally paid by the native states in this part of the country. Caste entertainments or dinner-parties are mostly

given in private houses. On the occasion, however, of a dinner to the gods, the banquet is given in a temple, or at the house of the person who has the management of the feast. Women generally take their dinner after the men have done theirs, but when the space is large enough to accommodate the members of both sexes, they take their dinner at the same time as the men, but they never sit together, different apartments being allotted for them. Grown up boys take their places among the men. Little children are taken care of by their mothers.

Invitations are generally but not always confined to members of the caste to which the host belongs. Members of different castes are made to sit in different groups, small, vacant places being left between them to distinguish one group from another, Members of very low castes are allowed to take their food home, and certain people employed receive presents consisting of raw food (rice, wheat, flour, &c.)

In small villages well-to-do Máhrattas invite Brahmins to dinner; when, for instance, for the first time they occupy a house newly built, or

when they have been blessed with a son, or when they have to fulfil a vow, to feed a certain number of Brahmins, made during illness, or in times of other distress. When the number of Brahmins invited is very large, a separate day is reserved for them. The food eaten by Brahmins is always prepared by cooks of the same caste. When a family priest is invited the members of his family are not necessarily included. In the case of dinner-parties held among Brahmins, the guests eat off leaves; among other castes, either dishes or leaves are used. The dishes are generally made of brass. Wealthy Brahmins, Savakas, or landlords, are generally possessed of large cooking vessels which they lend to anybody who has to prepare a grand feast. Cooking vessels belonging to a whole village are seldom to be found in the Southern Máhratta country. Temples or shrines enjoying large endowments are often found to be in possession of cooking vessels, which are generally in the charge of the worshippers of the god, under the superintendence of the village authorities, by whom they are lent to

individuals for private use. A first-class dinner principally consists of dainties rich in sugar, ghee, milk, and spices, such as varieties of sweet balls, rice seasoned with sugar and saffron, &c. These varieties of rich food are prepared at the same time.

At dinner-parties given by wealthy Brahmins or chiefs, the guests seldom exceed two hundred; the number may vary from twenty to two hundred. The cost per head varies from eight annas to a rupee, or a rupee and a quarter.

Second-class dinners consist of s single variety of sugared balls and wheat cakes holding within their folds a certain preparation of molasses. The cost varies from six to ten annas. This is the food usually prepared in most dinner-parties. In third-class dinners the fare consists of simple wheat cakes, ghee, and pulse. In poor families this is the general food, the cost of which varies from three to six annas. When select parties are invited on the occasions of marriage and thread ceremonies (*i.e.*, the investiture of the sacred cord, confined to

the Brahmins), the expenses vary from forty to two hundred and fifty rupees. Widows never figure among the principal guests at dinner-parties. The dinner-time, when the number is very large, is from twelve o'clock to three or four p.m., but, when select parties are given, the time generally appointed is from nine a.m., to twelve a.m. Brahmins put on a rich silken cloth at the time of dinner, other classes do not change their clothes. People begin their meal when all varieties of food prepared are brought before them. Wealthy or highly influential people, and very high officers, avoid going to dinner-parties, but they are often willing to be forced to take a dose of milk and sugar, to show their kind regard for the host.

CHAPTER XIII

A Marriage Dinner-party—Exciting Scene—Ceremonies—Dinner-party of Women—Critics of the Entertainment—Amusements—Mourning the Dead—Origin of Medicine in the East—The Athavta Veda—Surgeons and Physicans—Medical Manuscripts—Religious Wanderers—Deccan Quacks—Indian Drugs.

WHEN a dinner-party is given by a Brahmin on the occasion of a marriage, invitations for the feast are sent round to the friends and relatives of the host on the evening previous to the day appointed. Next morning, about ten a.m., preliminary intimations to the effect that dinner is quite ready are given through a Brahmin especially employed for the purpose. The guests appear slowly one by one, with their sacred cloth in their arm-pit, and a couple of drinking-pots in their hands, under a large

canopy (mandapa) specially prepared in front of the house for the occasion. The sacred cloth and the pots, belonging to very well-to-do people, are brought in by their Brahmini servants. Gradually the stream of diners becomes more and more thick, and at last the most important persons invited appear, accompanied by tom-toms (for I am describing a marriage dinner-party).

The whole place is crowded with guests; some changing their clothes, some washing their feet, some talking, while others are moving about here and there. In the meantime the business of serving the dishes goes on. Beautiful young women, dressed in their gayest sacred attire, and decorated with all the ornaments which their circumstances can command, are seen passing to and fro between the rows of dishes, and throwing a handful of some eatable from a small pot in their hands on every dish as they pass. Large quantities of food are supplied by swarthy cooks. The host and a few of his familiar friends and near relations are engaged in taking the guest to their proper seats. The

whole place presents a scene of excitement at once animated and picturesque. Some persons laugh, some talk; friends greet each other, and converse on divers subjects. Some are impatient enough to curse those who do not make their appearance in good time, and for whom they are therefore required to wait. The excitement becomes great as the business of serving the dishes nears its completion. At last the family priest repeats some sacred words, and the host sprinkles a little quantity of water over the whole company, announcing the long-expected intelligence that dinner is ready, and about to commence.

The bustle and noise are now converted into almost perfect silence, which is here and there broken by the gurgling sound caused by the vehement efforts of some guest to swallow large quantities of some liquid preparation, such as ksheer (sweet milk with rice), &c. Calls for rice and ghee are soon heard, and promptly obeyed. The parties then fall upon the food, which consists of sweet balls of rice richly seasoned. Heaps of rice are energetically poured

upon the dishes, from whence they are rapidly transferred into the expectant stomach. It is long before any regular conversation begins, but the company now is generally more talkative than at the commencement of the dinner.

The host now goes round the whole place, and, standing before every individual guest, makes his apology for the detention and other inconveniences, and for whatever imperfections there might be in the preparations and arrangements made for the occasion. Cries of "No, no, everything is excellent," proceed from the satisfied guests, all of whom compliment him on the success of the entertainment. The left hand of some of them is passed unconsciously over their distended stomachs, as if to corroborate more significantly what their words have intimated, and all try to do full justice to the dainties before them. When in time the vigour of their appetite flags, conversation is again resumed, the subject often being the excellence of the viands served. Some old people among the company are heard to regret that such occasions are now becoming comparatively rare,

and praise past times at the expense of the present ones. Some take to reciting verses, in which noisy occupation great boys are sure to play a considerable part. One or two well-trained singers entertain the assembly with their music, exhibiting in their performance exquisite vocal ingenuity. The recitation of each stañza is closed with a long and universal chorus of shouts, "May victory be to Ráma, may victory be to Shiva!" in which all the guests join. The last course of dishes is then brought, consisting of milk and curd, which, being devoured, the dinner is at an end, and various guests get up and go out to wash their hands. Pán-supari is then distributed, and the party disperses.

One of the most diversified, exciting, and agreeable scenes which Hindoo society exhibits is presented by a dinner-party consisting entirely of women. In such a dinner-party rank and precedence are most scrupulously attended to. The seats near the bride and bridegroom are occupied by the mothers, sisters, and other

near relations. The mothers, as becomes their age, and the importance which naturally attaches to them on such occasions, are generally silent, and when they speak they do so in very measured tones. It is by no means to be inferred that they are quite contented and pleased; far from that.

The bridegroom's mother is dissatisfied because her boy, who is the emblem of perfection in her eyes, has not got a fitting necklace, a golden ring, or a shawl from his father-in-law. She, however, manages to preserve silence, though, of course, when she is forced to speak, she never fails to drop a syllable or two indicative of her displeasure.

The bride's mother is more subdued in her demeanour, and though not satisfied to her heart's content, because some ornament is still wanting to her girl, she is generally very solicitous to gain the good wishes of her apparently implacable coadjutor; she is therefore not very talkative. The sisters of the married couple give full licence to their tongues. The relations of the boy, while dinner is going on,

boisterously find fault with everything that belongs to the girl. Every little imperfection is carefully marked out and made the subject of a cutting comment. Even the eatables do not escape this close scrutiny. One shrewd girl pronounces the sweet balls to be too sweet, another remarks that inferior sugar is employed, while a third finds fault with the butter, or anything on which she can exercise her wit. These fair critics take good care, however, to stuff themselves with the dainties they censure.

When dinner is half over and the claims of hunger are satisfied, the parties amuse themselves with short riddles in verse, in bantering one another, and in expressing bitter remarks. Young and lovely women on these occasions muster all their intellectual strength in the battle of agreeable raillery. Not only the young people, but the mothers, if not very old, are made the objects of these attacks. Every person takes care to represent that the bride, or bridegroom to whom she belongs, is a paragon of beauty, the perfection of grace and virtue,

while the partner selected is far below comparison. It is creditable to both parties that the language used towards the bride and bridegroom is always respectful. But this deference is seldom shown to their relations. The pride of the all-important mothers is commented upon in the midst of a roar of laughter, and the vanity of the blustering brothers and sisters is cleverly ridiculed.

When the energies of the young people flag, they are assisted by old women who generally keep aloof, but who volunteer their aid when they see that their young friends are not able to maintain the combat. The sayings of these old ladies are generally applauded by both parties, and they give an air of seriousness and respectability to the whole affair. Old ladies, however, generally content themselves with whispering to their neighbours of their own skill in the war of words when young.

Such a dinner lasts two or three hours, and the guests generally rise satisfied with themselves and with everybody around them. The perfect good-humour which prevails throughout

in a party composed apparently of such semi-hostile elements, would be incomprehensible to a foreigner not acquainted with native dinners of this description. But such is, nevertheless, the fact. In spite of the opinion of the writer, I think that it would be difficult to imagine a more unpleasant entertainment.

One of our head-servants had the misfortune to lose his only child, a boy. The poor mother, in an agony of grief, for Hindoos are very tender-hearted, mourned after the fashion of her people. During the five hours that elapsed between the death and the removal of the body for interment (children are buried by Hindoos), she never ceased to moan and utter loud cries; with the constant re-iteration so expressive of grief, she implored her bâba to rise and return to her arms.

Having ascertained that my presence would be thought complimentary, I hastened to the scene of affliction. The room, destitute of furniture, was lighted from the door and from a small grated aperture under the roof. On the

floor, on a sheet, lay the deceased, a handsome boy of nine years old. He appeared to smile; his dark eyes, undimmed as yet, were open, and his white teeth were displayed. At the head of the corpse stood the father, quietly sobbing; at the feet cowered the mother, rocking herself to and fro in her misery, and bowing her forehead to the earth. It was a picture that forcibly reminded me of Scripture.

On a somewhat similar occasion one of our friends was placed in a curious dilemma; the mother of a deceased baby came to ask if she might lay it out on one of the large dishes belonging to the dinner-service. The lid of a basket with flowers was suggested as more the thing, and the poor woman retired quite satisfied with the new idea.

Many Oriental scholars of the day believe that with "the wisdom of the East" originated the science of medicine. In very early times the Indian surgeon dissected the human body, and the physician, sitting under the pipal-tree, discussed with his pupils the nature of man, the precepts of health, and the treatment of disease.

By the vulgar this knowledge was supposed to have been obtained by divine teaching, and probably the sages were not unwilling to have it believed that one of the fourteen precious objects which the gods produced by churning the ocean was a learned physician. An ancient poem on the subject of medicine, which is referred to in the Athava Veda, is supposed to have been composed by Brahma. It consisted of a thousand chapters and a hundred thousand verses, but, in consideration of the short term of life enjoyed by human beings, it was condensed into eight chapters, the first of which treated of surgery. This poem is thought to have had a real existence, but to have become obsolete after certain other works were composed. One of these called Charaka, from the name of the author, is still extant, or said to be so, although composed at so early a period that many of the present members of the Hindoo Pantheon had not appeared upon the scene at the time, and beef was not forbidden. Charaka alludes to it as an article of food, which should not be taken daily.

The next work in point of age is called

"Susruta A' Yur-Veda," the origin of which was as follows: Dhanvantari, the surgeon of heaven, descended upon earth in the person of Diva-dása, King of Benares, for the purpose of teaching surgery along with the other branches of medical knowledge, by which the gods preserved themselves from decline, disease, and death. The royal teacher replies thus to the pupils that question him: "The healing of wounds was the first necessity of the medical art among the gods, on account of their battles with demons." It would appear that from very early ages Hindoo medical practitioners were divided into two classes—surgeons and physicians. In spite, however, of the precedence given by the Benares king to surgery its practice has gradually declined, and I am told that at the present day there is no such person in India as a surgeon who has received his education in that country. Simple cases are treated by the barbers, who possess some skill, and are able to attend women in cases of difficulty, but, where it can be procured, recourse is had to European aid, or to natives educated in a European school.

With regard to the native physician it is different. "In a few families," says Dr. Wise, "the ancient medical works are studied, and the prized manuscripts are transmitted from generation to generation. I have had the pleasure of knowing several such families and hereditary physicians, rich, independent, and much respected. Among such individuals, the ancient manuscripts were so highly valued that the influence of station, rank, and money was sometimes ineffectually exerted to purchase them. In some cases it was difficult to induce the proprietors to give permission to copy them, from their supposed value, and the dread of their receiving injury or being lost. This difficulty was increased by the superstitious belief of many that all the benefits to be derived from their possession had been bestowed by God upon the individual and his family who possessed them as a special mark of favour, and would vanish on the manuscripts being sold, or even the precepts communicated to unauthorized persons."*

* See "Review of the History of Medicine," by Thomas A. Wise, M.D. Introduction, p. xi.

"Then there are the religious wanderers, who are possessed of a kind of curious and dangerous knowledge of the subject. They sometimes effect extraordinary cures, and succeed when even the skill of our faculty has been exerted in vain. One such case, in which an English gentleman was cured of a sore in the leg that had resisted the influence of all remedies, came under my notice. A celebrated fakir was allowed to try his skill, and was perfectly successful. His treatment consisted of frequent fumigations, but he would not divulge the secret of the drugs he employed."

In the Deccan, quacks are to be met with who sell drugs, while their women beg, and their children are ventriloquists.

All Hindoo Medical works are written in Sanskrit, and one would think that students must occasionally get bewildered in the subtilties of the language. One of its peculiarities is the number of synonyms employed for natural objects. Almost all well-known plants have several synonyms, and some have as many as forty names; the lotus has thirty-eight. Native

physicians learn these synonyms by heart, just as they do their grammars and dictionaries. In order to assist the memory, medical works, like most other Sanskrit writings, are composed in rhyme, and any one of these numerous synonyms of a drug may be used to designate it, in prescriptions containing the article, according to the fancy of the writer and the necessities of metrical composition. Many names again are common to numerous drugs, and it is often impossible without the help of annotations to make out which is meant by a particular term. It is to be observed, however, that, in the absence of any scientific description of plants, synonyms sometimes serve to describe their prominent character.

I happened to meet with an interesting little work that contained a number of the prescriptions now in daily use. They are principally composed of vegetable ingredients, and many of them are no doubt good practical remedies; others are the products of an age when the great object of learned physicians was to prepare an elixir that was to render health

permanent and life perpetual. These are strangely fanciful. The frequent use made of the purifying products of the cow may not be agreeable to the present refinement of English notions, but these remedies that have been really beneficial for unnumbered centuries contrast favourably with those in vogue during our Middle Ages. I have in my possession a small manual of medicine, in black letter, published in the reign of James I. The first prescription given enjoins that "six live swallows be taken and pounded in a mortar," and in the illness of His Grace, the Duke of Buckingham, cow dung was liberally employed.

The minerals employed by the Hindoos consist of a few substances combined in endless variety. Arsenic is to be found in all the bazaars, and little restriction is put upon its sale. Powdered gold is given to infants under the impression that it will impart strength and beauty to their frames. Silver and bell-metal are also administered internally, and the use of iron is so ancient that it was an ingredient in the hair-dyes used by the gods.

The diamond, topaz, ruby, sapphire, emerald, lapis-lazuli, pearls, corals, and the gomeda, a yellow gem the colour of fat (thought to be amber), figure as the nine gems, and their collective powder was thought to be the most efficacious. This was prepared from the stones in the following manner:—They were soaked in such fluids as oil, whey, sour conjee, and cow's urine, and afterwards put into crucibles deep down in a pit filled with burning balls of cow-dung, a process repeated perhaps a hundred times. Roasted orpiment (a mixture of sulphur and arsenic) is also used, but physicians do not prepare the latter themselves, from a notion that the man who roasts orpiment dies soon. They therefore purchase it from fakirs, and other quacks. Many other fanciful drugs are introduced (in some instances probably for the sake of the rhyme). "The three acids" also often figure.

Of certain animals, every part is used in medicine. Tiger's flesh, as we know, is supposed to give courage and strength, that of the jackal rubbed into butter is given in cases of insanity,

and that of the mongoose is administered in nervous diseases. The only animal poison employed is that of the black cobra. It is collected by making the reptile bite on a piece of stick or wood, when the poison is poured out, and received on a morsel of plantain leaf. The liquid poison is preserved in two ways. It is allowed to congeal and dry in a cup, or it is rubbed with a fourth part of mustard-oil, and spread out as before on a leaf. Thus treated, it coagulates into a granular, agglutinated mass of a yellow-brown colour. When spontaneously allowed to dry, serpent poison coagulates into shining, crystalline, yellowish-white granules.

Numerous formulæ containing this poison are given in compilations. The following is an example: Take of mercury, sulphur, prepared tin, aconite, and cobra poison equal parts; mix them together, and soak the mixed powder in the bile of the rahitaka fish, wild boar, peaccck, buffalo, and goat successively, and make it into a pill mess. This medicine is administered in doses that can be taken up by the point of a

needle. It is given in brain and remittent fevers.*

* See "The Materia Medica of the Hindus," by Chand Dutt, civil medical officer. With a glossary of Indian plants, by George King, M.B.F.L.S., superintendent of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Calcutta. Thaker, Spink, & Co., Calcutta.

CHAPTER XIV.

Snake Worship and Festivals—The Potters—Sculptured Stones and Images—Belgaum Fair—Legend of its Origin—Barbarous Proceedings—Jumping through Flames—Melancholy Tragedy—Magisterial Inquest—Superstitious Ceremonies—A Tamasia.

THE Nag Panchami, or snake festival, takes place in the middle of the rains. It is a day on which the Hindoos perform many ceremonies, hoping by so doing to secure immunity from the bites of that reptile for the rest of the year. It is kept up with great vigour in the Southern Máhratta country, where the ancient superstition of snake-worship still lingers. Images of the hooded snake are set up in every Hindoo house and worshipped. Such images are moulded by the pottery-makers, who

are divided into three castes. One caste make tiles and bricks, another form pots upon a wheel, the third are image-makers.*

Each snake thus formed is provided with a small bowl securely placed in one of his coils, into which an offering of milk is poured. In remote situations live snakes are kept, which are fed from saucers with milk and cakes.

Not five miles from Belgaum there is an artificial mound in which one of these sacred pets is kept, and a like relic exists near Sattara. It must be understood, however, that the offerings made to a snake are not meant to propitiate an enemy, but are given as a token of gratitude to a beneficent power.

The serpent, with his annual new and glossy skin (a sign in the eyes of his worshippers of a

* Cases of fracture and dislocation are consigned to the pottery-makers, but I know not to which caste. The potter places the limb of his patient in what he considers the best position, and then covers the part affected with moist clay. This when dry fixes the limb, and under such treatment both simple and compound fractures often do well. But, as may be expected from this process, distortions and stiff joints are more frequently the consequence.

youth perpetually renewed), makes his re-appearance with the cloudy weather, heralding in the longed-for rains which are to fertilize the earth, and by the association of ideas he became in the minds of the simple forefathers of the race a harbinger of the glad time, and finally came to be worshipped as the ruler of the rain cloud—a worship to the prevalence of which the sculptured stones of India bear witness.

Anxious to obtain some of these images, long before the festival took place, I asked certain friends to procure some of the pottery specimens for me. Never were friends so faithful. The day arrived, and "nagas" came pouring in to the great surprise and amusement of the native servants, parcels containing snakes of every colour "for the great lady." The first, a fine fellow with expanded hood, quite a work of art, curled up from a board, pink with brown spots. He had been made by order, but alas! he had no cup. "The Europe lady was not going to make an offering to the snake, then why should she require a cup?" so argued the pottery-maker. Then two beauties arrived, a present

from the native apothecary One was green and crimson, the other was yellow and blue, and there safely enough were their bowls coiled up within their tails. A parcel from the bazaar yielded a pair with very big hoods and red eyes. Lastly there came a box containing a pair of finely worked, antique brass gods, each sitting under a canopy formed by the five-headed naga. My last present was a painting of the creature, such a one as is hung up in the Hindoo houses; it also had five heads. The people who see the five-headed cobras, in metal and sculpture, believe that this was the reptile's original form, and think that the race has deteriorated, the many heads of former days having dwindled into the single head with which the creature is now furnished.

After the Nag Panchami the wet season begins to break up. A succession of splendid sunsets glorified the evening of many a rainy day. Rosy cloudlets rippled up to the very zenith. Never was such sky-perspective seen. The eye seemed to penetrate into calm recesses of the purest green, with purple hills and golden islands

this green tint is a sign that the air is highly charged with electricity. Nor were the skies to the east less remarkable. Dense masses of vapour, the tint of the dove's wing, were piled up, six times as high, the learned say, as any terrestrial mountain chain; at the sunset hour, edged with gold and tinged with crimson.

The celebrated fair, held once every twelve years in Belgaum, took place just before my arrival, there, and, until I met with an account (in one of the journals of the Asiatic Society) of the barbarous way in which it is conducted, I was always regretting that I had not been present on the occasion. The legend that accounts for its foundation runs as follows: The son of a Mhár (people so low that they will even eat the carcases of dead cattle) went to reside in a village where he had frequently to pass through a street in which a celebrated Brahmin lived. It was the good man's habit to sit in his verandah and teach little boys to recite the Vedas. The Mhár's son took this opportunity of learning by heart a portion of the sacred books, and made himself acquainted with

all the duties of a Brahmin. He put on the sacred thread, and gave himself out to be the son of a Brahmin, and, going to the house of the teacher, he asked permission to learn with the other boys. By his strong memory and intelligence, the lad gave promise that he would turn out a celebrated vaidika (one that knows the Vedas by heart), and thereby gained the old man's favour, who gave him his daughter in marriage. Returning to his native place, he made his parents acquainted with all his adventures. He built a separate house, that he might live in it with his wife, and, after binding the people of his caste by a promise that they would not divulge the secret to his wife, he went again to his father-in-law's house, and took her to his new home. Notwithstanding these precautions, the Brahmini girl heard soon enough of his low caste. No words can describe her indignation when she learned that she was wedded to a Mhár. Immediately she returned to her father's house, and poured a torrent of abuse on him. After this, she went back to her husband's abode and attempted to kill him; but

he escaped from her grasp, and entered the body of a buffalo, which was killed by her. She also set fire to the house in which her mother-in-law lived, and, finally expiring of rage, became a devi or goddess after her death; and it is in her honour that such fairs are celebrated and buffaloes killed.

Such is the story the people tell in Belgaum. Every twelve years a large car, about fifty feet high, is prepared, a statue of the goddess is placed on it, and it is carried in procession through the town. It seems that on the last occasion the car was so heavy that it took three days to draw it through the thoroughfares, although some two hundred men were pulling it. When the car reached the green maidan under the glacis of the fort, where the feathery bamboos waved their plumes, twelve buffaloes and hundreds of goats were killed.

A large concourse of people was assembled, and blood flowed like water on that 14th of July. The head of the buffalo that was carried in procession before the car through the town was finally buried in the ground. During the

twelve days on which the car of Laksmi (not to be confounded with the goddess of the same name, the Venus of the Hindoo Pantheon) remained upon the ground, no mills were allowed to grind corn or sugar-cane.

Jumping through flames is one of the amusements at these fairs. It is a relic of that most ancient custom of appeal to the gods by fire-treading. Although forbidden by Government, it is still practised in very remote places. A boy was burnt to death under these circumstances some three years ago at a village called Perigangundi, in the Southern Máhratta country. The magistrates, hearing of the tragedy, hastened to the spot, and an inquest was held on the remains, upon which occasion the following facts were elicited; It was found that the place where the fire was kindled had been ploughed over so as to conceal it, but on examination the pit was found to be twenty-seven feet long, by seven and a half broad. It was about a span deep. The pit, which lay east and west, was dug on the open plain before the temple of the village deity. The image of

the goddess was placed at the west end, and it was towards it that the worshippers walked along the length of the pit.

The first witness called at the inquest deposed "that six bâubul (gum arabic) trees were cut into faggots and kindled." He goes on to enumerate the names of thirteen persons who trod on the fire. "One held a tabour in his hand, another came out ringing a bell; and as each got up out of the trench, he went and walked through a second pit with water in it. Last of all, Pakiri," (the deceased), "got down into the trench, like the rest, but he had not made a pace when he crossed his legs and rolled over; he was pulled out. I saw him; he was burned all over, and his mother and sister, getting a pumpkin, applied it to the wounds. He did not speak again. Like the rest, who walked through the fire, he wore a cloth wrapped tight round his waist and his loins, and his breast and arms were daubed with sandal paste." Napapa, another witness, states, "When I was away in the Mauritius, I was for eight years ill with dyspepsia, and made a vow

to the goddess of this temple to walk through fire if I got well. I recovered, and returned to my village. The landlords" (naming three) "supplied the materials required for the ceremony. That day the fire was lit at noon, and by two o'clock the fuel had burnt to embers. I had fasted all the day, and had bathed in the tank. I got down into the fire at the east end, meditating on Draupati" (the goddess of the temple), "walked through to the west, and went up the bank; then I went to the temple and got ashes, which I rubbed on me and went home. We went down to the fire to the sound of tom-toms, tabours, drums, and bells.* There were between two and three hundred people present." Another witness says, "I am pujari (*i.e.*, priest) of the temple of Draupati. I have walked through fire every year for the last eight years. I made no vow. It is my duty, as pujari, to walk through the fire. I took the karakam" (an earthen pot which is

* How applicable are the lines in "Paradise Lost!"

"Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard that pass through fire."

borne on the head of the pujari, and is supposed to be supported there miraculously. It is filled with water, and crowned with mogra leaves—(mogra is a Sanskrit word). "I walked from the temple to the tank; I bathed; then we all came to the pit with music. Then the stanikam" (superintendent of the temple) "and I went down to the fire and walked across it, and the others followed one by one." The fourth witness states, "Pakiri was my brother. My daughter, who is six years old, was ill with fever, and I vowed a flour-lamp to the goddess. We went to Pakiri's house, and he accompanied us to the fire-pit. There was a great crowd. I stood at some distance and looked on. I saw him when he was brought from the pit. He was burned all over. My mother came to the spot. We put cocoa-nut oil on the wounds. He died at eight o'clock. He had an attack of jaundice, and we made a vow to Draupati, saying, 'Mother, if he recovers, he shall tread on your fire.' So he trod the fire last year, and then he got well; but this year his fate came upon him. My mother is blind of both eyes,

and had no one in the house but him."

What a curious story of credulity and family affection! Draupati is probably one of the names of Sita, who had to prove her purity by fire.

The following custom prevails in the Southern Máhratta country among Brahmins, as well as in the lower castes of society: When a woman is likely to become a mother, a number of her female friends assemble, pour before the door of the room where she is a quantity of rice husk and set fire to it. To one door they tie an old shoe (our own familiar friend), and to the other a sprig of basil. This is done in order to prevent the entrance of demons. After the woman has bathed, she performs worship in the following manner: The friends bring in the stone on which the curry is bruised and the stone roller, colour them with saffron, place a mark upon them in the way that they daily mark their own foreheads, burn incense, and place an oblation before them. This done, they bring in a bitch, colour it, mark it, burn incense before it, and also honour it with an

oblation; the woman then makes an obeisance to it, and it is given a good meal of curry and rice. Cakes are also placed upon the curry. If there happens to be present a woman who has not hitherto been blessed with children, she eagerly seizes some of the cakes in the hope that, ere long, she may have a child. The thought suggests itself, have such ceremonies any kind of meaning, or are they indulged in merely as affording an opportunity for a tamasia?—a favourite word not only with the natives, but with the Anglo-Indian. It means every sort of noisy gathering, from a rout to a row. Tamasia is a jungle demon, whose pleasure it is to frighten travellers by rushing upon them out of the wood, making terrific noises.

CHAPTER XV.

Ruins of the Fort of Dhárwar—Story of the Fort—Kitur—Hindoo Loom—Crossing the Málparba—A Band of Gipsies—Climate of the Dhárwar District—Road Repairing—The Weyds—Dandis—Máhrattas on Horseback—A Hideous Scoundrel—Hindoo Superstition—Marks of Mohammedan Conquest—The Lingayats—Siege of Dhárwar.

I WAS very desirous of seeing the ruins of the once strong Fort of Dhárwar, which played an important part in the history of the Southern Máhratta country. It, however, lays claim to no remote antiquity, having been founded in the year 1403 by an officer appointed by the Raja of Duringoodie, to protect the valuable timber in the neighbourhood; the country

being at that period entirely covered with fine forests.

The story goes that this officer began to build a fort, two and a half miles to the east of the present site, but an accident, to which a mysterious interpretation was attributed, induced him to change his mind. It so happened that one day his dog followed a hare as far as the spot where the present fort stands. There the hare turned upon the dog and defied him. Henceforth Dharro considered the place where this had happened to be privileged, and gave the building he erected upon it his own name, Dhárwar, the Mansion or Fort of Dhar. This stronghold has always been considered to be the key to the Southern Máhratta country, and has been coveted accordingly. It was taken by Adil, Shah of Beejapur, in 1563; by the Emperor of Delhi in 1688; by the Máhrattas in 1753; by Hyder Ali, Sultan of Mysore, in 1778; and it was finally wrested from his son, Tippoo Saib, by the united efforts of the Máhrattas, the Nizam, and the British in 1791. So that it is a fort that has seen hard blows ex-

changed. On the last occasion it sustained a siege of twenty-nine weeks.*

Dhárwar lies fifty miles south of Belgaum, and it was an exhilarating moment when, one morning at day-dawn, I found myself galloping, tonga pace, towards it. For the first six miles the gentle ascent commanded a view of the fort, the southern face of which is particularly fine. The old Khan's entrance, with its great machicolated bastions, framed in luxuriant foliage, made a charming picture. Once over the ridge of the hill, and all was changed and unfamiliar. We skirted several large villages. One was called "Weaver-bird Town," another "The Sweet-Scented," from the number of roses once grown there. It is said no longer to deserve the fragrant appellation.

The only town on the road of any importance was Kitur. Its old fort, ruined, and smothered in vegetation, was banded about between Tip-

* See "A Narrative of the Operations of Captain Little's Detachment, and of the Máhratta Army, Commanded by Purserum Bhon, &c.," by Lieutenant E. Moor, Bombay Service, London, 1794.

poo (we were in his country now) and the Máhrattas. The final settlement of its affairs cost England the lives of some officers and several privates.

We made a detour in order to pass through the mud gateway, and up the one long street, where numbers of people were engaged in weaving. The Hindoos use a very primitive loom. It is made of four rough pieces of wood, and there is no arrangement for rolling up the warp, which is therefore stretched the entire length of the sari, from eight to ten yards. The weavers were singing as they worked, possibly the ballads of this border country.

One of the temples had a striking appearance. The spire over the cell was a pyramid of terra-cotta figures, painted, and set in niches. There was no alighting to see it, for, by this time, every boy and girl in the place was pursuing the carriage, and we were bumping sadly; the way, called by courtesy a road, being a succession of muddy dips. Rivers that cannot be bridged, often on account of their quicksand bottoms, are the pest of Indian travel.

It was an anxious moment when we came in sight of the Málparba. The most fortunate time for the traveller is when the rivers are at full flood, and this, fortunately, was the condition of the broad, swift stream before us. The tonga was emptied, pushed into it, and hauled up on to a great platform that was managed by ropes. My modest conveyance was a simple iron sugar-pan, a vessel, under ordinary circumstances, in which the sweet juice crushed from the cane is left to congeal. Its circular form offered little resistance to the force of the current. The modest amount of luggage was placed in the centre, and I was invited to seat myself upon it. The servant and the tonga driver then cautiously edged in, and when we had shipped a man with a long bamboo pole, we were pushed from the shore.

The optical effect during the transit was remarkable. The water appeared to be eddying round; a fine stepped tomb, rising from the river, seemed to turn first one side towards us, and then the other, and the shores curved about in the most perplexing manner. We

alone of all around seemed to be stationary, and yet we were the culprits who were perpetually making half circles. Sometimes it happens that people conveyed across in this fashion are so giddy that on landing they are unable to stand. Some Indian rivers are traversed in baskets covered with skins, the ancient coracle of our island. The strand presented an animated spectacle; a band of gipsies was waiting to cross, the wildest, most unkempt of human beings. Their eyes glittered through their bushy black hair, and the contrast between their dark skins and white teeth gave them an air of ferocity. The women wore a profusion of barbaric brass ornaments; the discs of their finger-rings were as large as a florin. An emaciated gosaeen was ornamenting his body with funeral ashes. His toilette finished, he drew forth some cooked rice, which he skilfully threw into his mouth. A herd of buffaloes were crossing the river to some spot lower down. With noses well out of the water, they suffered their bulky forms to be carried down backwards, until their master, shouting to them from the

opposite shore, bid them land. These intelligent animals are very docile.

Resuming our journey, we sped along up and down hill, rarely on the level. The country was timbered like a gentleman's park; there were noble clumps of trees and crops of rice, of flag-leaved millet and of sugar-cane, sometimes terraced one above the other. They were nourished by rills that came murmuring down from charming little sheets of water that reflected the fine foliage. Fat cattle grazed in the meadows. It was at this season a land of plenty and peace that put one in a humour to enjoy the pleasures of the road. The climate of the Dhárwar district, where the monsoons meet, is quite exceptional, and differs widely from that of many parts of India.

It was the proper season for the repair of the roads. This employment, along with all the stone-cutting in this part of the country, is in the hands of a race of people called the Weyds, who travel about in large bodies. Their appearance is highly respectable. Their turbans

and the hair of the women were decorated with fresh flowers.

Besides the driver, every tonga carries a man who has charge of the ponies when they stop, and who assists in moments of difficulty. These "odd boys," who were changed every six miles, sat at my feet. Most of them had mouths hideously red from the betel nut, which, mixed with lime, they constantly chewed. Some were good-looking and tidy, others were black and dirty; one of the latter class had his ears pierced, and through the holes were stuck lovely pink roses. Even this degraded creature had pleasure in the beautiful. More than one fakir, with long, flowing, flame-coloured beard, came wandering along, pilgrims from some holy shrine far south, and occasional Hindoo devotees called Dandis. The latter carry long sticks, which they are not entitled to bear until they are fifty years of age. This, with a miserable bit of rag, a mat, and a drinking pot, is their sole worldly wealth, and alms they must ask but once a day.

There were also groups of people coming

from some fair, with saffron-coloured flags. The antics of a well-to-do Hindoo, perhaps some young merchant from Hubli, or more likely a petty chief, were very diverting. He came along in shabby state, bestriding an old white horse,* and attended by a couple of shambling followers, mounted on tattoos. His own steed was gaily caparisoned. Natives always ride with a crupper and a martingale, and these were encrusted with great bosses of silver, and

* The Indian gentleman likes a white horse, because it shows off the trappings with which he loves to adorn it. The Arab chooses his steed with an eye to the ground it has to cover. It is stated in a work written by General Daumars upon the Arab horse, that when Abd-el-Kader was hotly pursued by his enemies he said, "My son, drop to the rear, and tell me the colour of the horses of our foe, and may Allah burn his grandfather!" "White," was the reply. "Then we will go to the south," said the chief, "where, on the vast plains of the desert, the wind of the white horse will not stand in a protracted chase." Again the chief said, "My son, what coloured horses now pursue us?" "Black, oh! my father." "Then we will go among the stones and rocky ground, for the foot of the black horse is not strong." A third time the young Arab was sent to the rear, and reported "chestnut horses." "Then," said the chief, "we are lost; who but Allah can deliver us from chestnut horses?"

the steed had a necklace to match. Hung about it were several cows' tails dyed red, worn for the double purpose of ensuring good luck and frightening away the flies. The high-peaked embroidered saddle had under it the rider's carpet, his cushion, and probably his wardrobe. Máhrattas have a most absurd appearance on horseback. They ride with their knees very high, and they turn out their toes, and dig their heels into the horse's flanks with the regular motion of a wooden harlequin pulled by a string. Instead of a whip, a strong leather thong attached to the rein is used.

In one of the old forts of this country, taken by the English, an autograph letter from Tippoo Saib, addressed to the Killedar, was found. Though bragging in it of the success of his arms, he admits that on one occasion he was partially defeated. This he attributed to a defect in his cavalry. "This disadvantage was," he says, "the martingale, which checked the horses in rearing, and was therefore henceforth to be discontinued in his dominions. The English," he goes on to remark, "wore none, which

alone gave them their apparent superiority in charging."

Our roadside friend was anxious to display his horsemanship; but, alas! his steed, feeling his mouth unmercifully twitched, did nothing but describe circles, and finally carried his master into a ditch, where we left him.

Such folks dose their horses when sick with clarified butter, sugar, and spices, mixed up with flour. In case of severe indisposition recourse is had to a magic medicine composed of thirty-two ingredients, and, under the idea of making them fat and glossy, sheep's-head broth, rice, milk, and such-like dainties are administered. At one place where we changed ponies, a circumstance occurred that for awhile took the sunshine out of the sky, and the green from the pastures. Whilst peacefully eating my sandwiches, a poor thin paria dog came up with longing looks. I threw him some food, when suddenly a large stone struck the animal, who fled away yelling. It was thrown by a remarkably tall, powerful man, well dressed, the most hideous human being I ever looked upon. He

was perfectly black, with degraded features, and a head of villainous shape. His square jaws and brawny neck were streaked with rivulets of yellow paint. Not one word of reproof had I in my limited vocabulary. But, sure that such a wretch must be full of superstition, I fixed my eyes on his, muttering, and pointing at him, and the cur slunk away.

Some pictured stones lay about, and there were many with the old Canerese characters upon them. The latter, I was informed, were very old, and related to grants of land. Many a fine Jain pillar strengthened the arches that spanned the streams, and decayed I'dgarhs marked where the foot of the Mohammedan had passed. Huge linghams adorned with flowers and raised upon high platforms told of the race that have superseded them. The Lyngayats who are dissenting Hindoos are very numerous in this part of India.

The following morning my friends were kind enough to take me over the fort. The exterior was not particularly striking, In fact it is now, in its ruinous state, almost hidden by the glacis,

the height of which was a serious error. The narrow entrance way wound between lofty walls guarded by strong bastions, and passed under three fine gateways of the Mogul period. The pointed arches were filled in with delicate tracery, the doors set in them were as strong as teak-wood and iron could make them, yet in parts they were most delicately worked; above them were inscriptions in the beautiful Persian character. One of these, if properly interpreted, is quaint enough. "S—— built this gateway, and the workmen were paid." Bungalows were scattered about in the vast interior, which was not particularly well kept. One spot commanded a good view of the double ditch, and over to the cavalier, from which once floated Tippoo's proud banner with the tiger stripes. Tippoo means tiger, and the Sultan had the head and the stripes upon his throne, and on almost every article that belonged to him.

During the time that the siege of this fort lasted (as I have said before, twenty-nine weeks), the appearance of the allies engaged before it was eagerly looked for in Mysore by Lord

Cornwallis, who was in person directing the course of the war there. The siege of Dhárwar throws such light upon the way in which such operations were conducted that I am tempted to give a few extracts from "Captain Little's narrative."

"On January the 21st, 1791, Dhárwar was reached by the English detachment, who as they advanced could see the Bhow's (the Máhratta commander) batteries firing, and the fort returning it smartly.

"At four in the morning on the 7th, at the quick firing of three guns from the British or breaching battery, which was the signal, the business commenced. A most tremendous fire of guns, mortars, rockets, and musketry was poured from the fort and batteries, and, as no motion was made by the Máhrattas for an attack, the undivided fire of the enemy was directed at us. Blue lights and false fires ranged along the cavalier and lower parapet of the curtain, showing everything very clearly. . . . . The 9th battalion continued filling the ditch for about an hour, during which time, from the injudicious

steepness of the glacis, the stormers were securely lodged under it. Soon after daybreak, when our work was nearly completed, the fascines, from some unknown cause, took fire, and from their dryness burnt so furiously as to render all further exertions useless, and the British Colonel ordered the parties to return. . . . . The lights on the parapets and towers produced a sublime effect. . . . . The balls from the fort were so roughly made as to lacerate the sufferers. The Bhow remonstrated with the Killedar on the impropriety of using such ammunition, and received for answer that 'the Killedar had no better and was very sorry that the Bhow did not like it.' The Máhrattas, we are convinced, would not with twenty guns, against the present garrison, breach Dhárwar in seven years. A gun is loaded and the whole of the people in the battery sit down and talk and smoke for half an hour when it is fired. If it knocks up a great dust it is thought sufficient, and it is re-loaded, the parties resuming their smoking and conversation.

"During two hours in the middle of the day, generally from one to three, a gun is seldom fired on either side, that time, as it would appear, being set apart for meals. The English were much annoyed by a smart gun which the British soldiers called 'the grey goose.' The Máhrattas had very ingenious names for their guns.

"On March the 9th, a cessation of hostilities was requested by the Killedar, and in half an hour a harmonious intercourse subsisted between the Sepoys of the Europeans and their recent enemies. The officers were allowed to look into the ditch, and were treated with great civility and respect. Not so those of the Bhow; they were treated with distrust and not suffered to pass the glacis. The fort of Dhárwar was at last surrendered to the Máhrattas by an honourable capitulation. On April the 3rd, Tippoo's garrison marched out. The fine old commander, Khan Bahadur, came forth in his palanquin. His dress was white and plain, and very neat; his countenance was dejected, which added to the esteem which every soldier felt for so

gallant a brother. The ten thousand picked men which originally garrisoned the fort were, before the capitulation, reduced to three thousand."

A large proportion of the troops that manned this fort, Tippoo's famous infantry, were Beydurs, a race of aboriginal descent, once very numerous in Mysore and the Southern Máhratta country. They still exist in diminished numbers. They believe in demons and sprites, whom they worship. These spiritual creatures have various names, and sacrifices are made to rude stones in their honour. The chiefs of this people were once very powerful. Colonel Meadows Taylor says, "We passed the Beydurs large tree of assembly, where fifteen hundred of them had congregated." The Máhratta loss was conjectured to be three thousand, that of the Europeans one hundred English and four hundred native infantry. "In this fort," continues the narrative, "several of our officers" (Bombay officers), "taken in a former war and brought hither, were confined. We were desirous to see the place in which they

were imprisoned, and several were shown to us, but as no marks could be found, such as letters cut in the doors or the like, we were not certain of being rightly directed."

The narrative makes mention of the primitive method of measuring time employed in these old forts. "It may be called a hydrostatic measure, being a small cup with a hole in the bottom, floated in a vessel of water. When a certain quantity of water was received into this cup, it sank from its gravity, and so pointed out a particular portion of time *—half an hour—when the sentinel who had charge of the measure struck the number on his gong and set it afloat again."

The exterior of the fort was still a confused mass of mounds and cuttings. I sat down on one of the latter that faced the cavalier. It towered above me on the other side of the

* It was the people of India who "constructed the first tables of the specific gravities of bodies, and wrote treatises on the flotation and sinking of bodies in water." See "The Conflict between Religion and Science," by J. W. Draper, M.D., p. 117.

ditches. The country around was fine and open, the same over which, a few years after the siege, when the fort had been delivered by the allies into the hands of the Máhrattas, "our duke" was seen careering—young, and handsome, and gallant, noting every sign of weakness with his eagle eye.

The references to Dhárwar Fort, in "the military correspondence and its supplementary despatches," evince an evident desire on his part to possess this fort. He writes from his camp at Hubli, October, 1800. "The orders I have received from Government make it necessary that I should have possession of and garrison Dhárwar; I therefore intend to seize it by a *coup-de-main*, if I cannot prevail upon the Killedar to give it up to me. And, if I find it too strong to be taken by a *coup-de-main*, I must besiege it and take it as I can." Colonel Wellesley (for the future we will call him "the duke") gives an exact plan by which he thinks that the *coup-de-main* can be effected. His plan can even now be traced with great exactness.

Again in October, he writes: "Matters have

taken such a turn in Poona that I imagine I shall withdraw from the territory in a few days. . . . If I had taken Dhárwar, it would have been for the Peishwa, and not against him." In November we find the following curious letter addressed to Colonel Palmer: "In one of my rides I visited Dhárwar, but did not express a wish to see the inside of the fort.* . . . On the following morning I received a letter from Bappogee Schindia, the Killedar, to inform me that he understood that I intended to visit him on that day, but that he could not receive me; at the same time he was much distressed at my having examined *his* fort, as he called it. I wrote in answer to Bappogee Schindia, that I had no intention of visiting him without giving him previous notice, and having his consent to receive me. At the same time I wrote to our common friend and stated the real object of my ride. . . . My curiosity led me to look at a fort of which I had heard so much. I re-

* All particulars respecting the Duke's connection with this fort are to be found in the books referred to above, under the head of Dhárwar.

quested him to calm the suspicions of Bappogee Schindia, and to tell him that, if I had wished to know anything about Dhárwar, I should have referred to my plan of the place, or should have made inquiry of one of the British officers who had taken Dhárwar for the Máhrattas, of whom there were several in the camp; rather than have ridden to the outside of the fort; and to remind him that all the forts in the Máhratta country, Dhárwar excepted, had gone through my hands, and after I had got possession I never kept them a moment, but gave all strongholds over to their real owners, as became a faithful ally."

The following letter shows that the persevering Duke, although he never got the fort of Dhárwar into his hands, did not leave the country without visiting its interior.

In July, 1804, we find this passage contained in a letter to Colonel Close:

"I am happy to inform you that I have every reason to be satisfied with Bappogee Schindia. He behaved well during the war, and on my marching to the southward he treated me with

greatest civility, and, as an extraordinary instance of liberality in a Killedar, I mention that he invited me, and I went to an entertainment inside the fort." The editor of the military correspondence (p. 333) puts the following note to this letter: "This mark of confidence of General Wellesley in the Killedar of Dhárwar was a matter of surprise to everyone. Even to the Killedar himself, who, remarking afterwards that he had not taken advantage of it, said, 'For I am still a Máhratta.'"

By the treaty of Poona, made in June, 1817, the Dhárwar district was ceded to the Company, after which the fort was suffered to decay. It continued, however, in such a state of preservation as to render it necessary to breach it in the year of the mutiny, the surrounding chiefs being exceedingly disaffected towards the English.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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